NATION

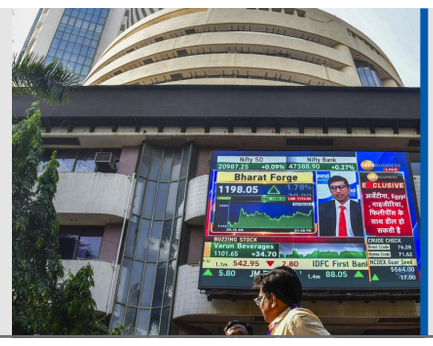
Ahmedabad Sufi saint & kin's graves razed, 35 held

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Investors lose ₹7L cr as Sensex tanks

≫ Page: 7 ≪



SPORTS

Champions League: London is calling Madrid for record 18th final

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Now, Russia accuses US of meddling in India's LS polls

Russia claims US was trying to 'unbalance' internal politics

MOSCOW, 9 MAY

Russia has claimed that the United States was trying to interfere in India's parliamentary elections and "unbalance" the internal political situation in the country.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova also said the US was yet to provide "reliable evidence" of the involvement of Indian citizens in the foiled murder plot against Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

In November last year, US federal prosecutors charged Indian national Nikhil Gupta with working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Pannun.

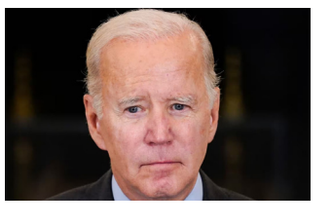
Pannun, wanted in India on terror charges, holds dual citizenship of the US and Canada. He has been designated as a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova, when asked to respond to a report by the Washington Post claiming that India is trying to adopt the policies as Russia and Saudi Arabia, said, "Washington lacks understanding of India's national mentality and history and continues to make unfounded accusations about religious freedoms in India,"

"Regular unfounded accusations by the United States against New Delhi ...we see that they groundlessly accuse not only India but also many other states...of violating religious freedoms are a reflection of the United States' misunderstanding of the national mentality, the historical context of the development of the Indian state and disrespect for India as a state," she said. Describing the interference as a "colonial period mentality," the Russian spokesperson accused the White House of complicating the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

"The Washington Post, it seems to me, should use the term "repressive regime" and everything you quoted in relation to Washington. It is difficult to imagine a more repressive regime than Washington, both in domestic and international affairs," she said.

The Washington Post, citing unnamed sources, named a Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) officer in connection with the alleged plot to kill Pannun on American soil last year. India has strongly rejected the claims, saying that the report made "unwarranted and unsubstantiated" imputations on a serious matter and that an investigation into the case was underway. —*PTI*



Vladimir Putin, Narendra Modi and Joe Biden *PHOTO: PTI*

> **Washington lacks understanding of India's national mentality and history, and yet continues to make unfounded accusations about religious freedoms in India**
>
> Maria Zakharova, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson

TMC claimed that BJP has confessed on camera that the rape accusations in Sandeshkhali were concocted *PHOTO: PTI*

2 Sandeshkhali women do U-turn on rape case

KOLKATA, 9 MAY

TMC on Thursday accused BJP of spreading falsehood about the incidents of Sandeshkhali, after purported videos claimed that a local BJP leader made several women sign blank papers which were later filled up as complaints of sexual assault against TMC leaders.

TMC filed a complaint with ECI against the Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari and others, claiming that a leader of BJP has "confessed" on camera that the rape accusations in Sandeshkhali were concocted.

The complaint is based on a video in which a man claiming to be Gangadhar Kayal -- the BJP's Mandal President in Sandeshkhali -- is heard saying Adhikari, was "behind the whole conspiracy". In the "sting operation" video shot by a news platform and shared by the TMC on X, Kayal is heard saying sexual harassment complaints were filed at the behest of Adhikari. In one of the videos, a woman was heard saying, "We were deceived into signing on blank papers. We discovered later that rape complaints had been lodged in our names. This is a blatant lie."

"Such actions suggest a calculated effort by BJP leaders to potentially manipulate their way to power in West Bengal," TMC said. —*PTI*

ED in SC opposes interim bail to Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday opposed in the Supreme Court the grant of interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a money-laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam, saying the right to campaign in elections is neither fundamental nor constitutional. In a fresh affidavit filed in the top court, ED said no political leader has ever been granted interim bail for campaigning even if he is not contesting polls. The ED is expected to soon file a fresh charge sheet in the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case. —*PTI*

Manipur: 5,457 'illegal immigrants' detected, says CM

IMPHAL, 9 MAY

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh said that the government has detected 5,457 "illegal immigrants" in the Kamjong district and measures are being taken for their deportation. The biometric data of 5,173 people have been collected, he said on X. "The biometrics of those staying at Phaikoh, Huimi Thana/Sangkalok refugee camps are being obtained," an official said. He said his government has been providing humanitarian aid to all the "illegal immigrants". "We have been handling this situation with utmost sensitivity," he said. Earlier this month, at least 38 more "illegal immigrants" from Myanmar, who had crossed over to Manipur, were deported through Moreh town in Tengnoupal, Singh had informed. —*PTI*

BJP K'taka social media convenor let off on bail

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

BJP Karnataka Social Media Cell Convenor Prashant Makanur was on Thursday summoned by the city police in post allegedly against members of SC and ST community, and was let off as he had obtained anticipatory bail. Earlier, BJP President JP Nadda and the party's IT cell national head Amit Malviya were issued summons in this connection. A case was registered based on a complaint lodged by the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee with the Election Commission and police on 5 May alleging violation of model code of conduct. They were booked under sections of Representation of People Act & section 505(2). —*PTI*

Padma honours to cine stars Vyjayanthimala and Chiranjeevi

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Yesteryear actor Vyjayanthimala Bali, Telugu star Konidela Chiranjeevi, the first woman judge of the Supreme Court late M Fathima Beevi and 'Bombay Samachar" owner Hormusji N Cama were among the eminent persons conferred Padma awards by President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday.

BJP leader O Rajagopal, Ladakh's spiritual leader Togdan Rinpochey, Tamil actor late "Captain" Vijayakant (both posthumous) and Kundan Vyas, group editor and CEO of Gujarati newspaper "Janmabhoomi", were also conferred Padma awards in Rashtrapati Bhavan.

While 90-year-old Bali and 68-year-old Chiranjeevi were given Padma Vibhushan, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

Padma Vibhushan is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service, Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of high order and Padma Shri for distinguished service in any field. Among those who were given Padma Bhushan included cardiologist Ashwin Balachand Mehta and former Union minister and BJP leader late Satyabrata Mookherjee. The Padma Shri awardees included unsung heroes like India's first woman elephant mahout Parbati Baruah, who is known as "Hasti Kanya", sculptor from Telangana Velu Anandachari, eminent weaver from Tripura Smriti Rekha Chakma, K Chellammal from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and squash player Joshna Chinappa. —*PTI*

President Droupadi Murmu confers Padma Vibhushan on Konidela Chiranjeevi in New Delhi on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

Beevi, Cama, Rajagopal, Vijayakant, Rinpochey and Vyas were conferred Padma Bhushan.

The Padma awards, among the highest civilian honours of the country, are conferred in three categories -- Padma

170 FLIGHTS CANCELLED

Staff calls off strike; AI Express reinstates 25 terminated crew

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Air India Express cabin crew on Thursday decided to withdraw their strike and the airline agreed to reinstate 25 staff who were terminated from service, according to sources.

A section of the cabin crew started reporting sick from Tuesday night to protest against the alleged mismanagement at the airline, forcing cancellation of more than 170 flights and impacting thousands of passengers at various airports.

The decisions to end the strike and withdraw the termination letters were agreed upon during a conciliation meeting between the representatives of cabin crew and the airline management at the Office of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) in the national capital on Thursday.

The meeting, which went on for nearly five hours, was between representatives of Air India Express Employees Union (AIXEU) and airline management. The union is affiliated to the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), an associate of the RSS.

Both parties will discuss the issues and there will be a meeting again on 28 May.

After detailed discussion, persuasion and on appeal of the Conciliation Officer and the Chief Labour Commissioner, the union representatives agreed that "all the cabin crew members who have reported sick will report for duty with fitness certificate immediately, according to a document signed by the representatives of the union and the airline.

Reportedly, the representatives of the airline assured that all the issues of cabin crew raised before the management will be looked into and resolved. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Maldives seeks India's forgiveness

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer, who is on his first official visit to India, has distanced his government from the derogatory remarks made by some of its ministers against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that it was not the stand of the government and that "proper action" has been taken to ensure that it is not repeated.

In an interview with ANI, Zameer reiterated the government's stance, stating, "I think if you have seen, like you said, we have said that it's not the stand of the government or it's not the view of the government. And we believe it shouldn't have been done. And then we are taking proper action to make sure that this don't repeat."

The row between India and the Maldives broke out over derogatory posts made by three officials about Modi. Following derogatory remarks against Modi, Maldives Deputy Youth Ministers Mariyam Shiuna, Mahzoom Majid and Malsha Shareef have been suspended indefinitely, but all three will continue to receive their salaries, the President's Office has said, Maldives local media Adhadhu reported. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

9 KILLED IN TAMIL NADU FIRECRACKER UNIT BLAST

VIRUDHUNAGAR , 9 MAY

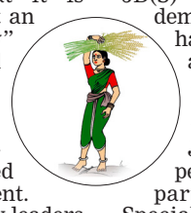
The toll in a blaze at a fireworks-manufacturing unit in Sivakasi on Thursday rose to nine, with one more worker succumbing to his burns, police said. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, who expressed condolences over the incident, directed the district authorities to provide appropriate medical care to the injured and save lives. Eight workers, including five women and three men, were killed in the accident at a fireworks-manufacturing unit near Sengamalapatti in Sivakasi in the district. Seven rooms where the firecrackers were stocked were completely gutted, police said. A senior police official said the cause of the fire was being ascertained and added that the unit is a licenced one. Stalin said that he directed the district collector to promptly launch a rescue operation. —*PTI*

JD(S) petitions Guv seeking CBI probe in 'sex scandal'

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

JD(S) on Thursday petitioned Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, seeking his intervention recommending a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the sexual abuse charges against Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna.

JD(S) claimed that it is "impossible to expect an impartial inquiry" from the Special Investigation Team (SIT), which is probing the case, as it is allegedly being influenced and misguided by the state government.



A delegation of party leaders led by former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy submitted a memorandum to the Governor. In it, they alleged that Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar is the "mastermind" behind the circulation of nearly 3,000 videos of Prajwal allegedly sexually abusing several women, and requested the governor to advise Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to drop Shivakumar from the cabinet.

Prajwal is facing sexual abuse charges. The scandal has raised a political storm, with the ruling Congress and BJP-JD(S) engaged in a slugfest. While Congress government has formed a SIT to probe the cases, the BJP and JD(S) -- NDA partners -- have demanded that the cases be handed over to the CBI, and action be taken against those behind the wide circulation of the explicit videos. The JD(S) has already suspended Prajwal from the party. Meanwhile, a Special Court for Elected Representatives adjourned to 13 May the bail plea hearing of JD(S) MLA HD Revanna in connection with a kidnap case. The abduction case is linked to the allegations of sexual abuse by Prajwal. Revanna was arrested by the SIT and remanded to police custody till 8 May. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

SSLC STATE TOPPER

Bagalkot farmer's daughter dreams of IAS

VAISHNAVI GOPALRAJ
BENGALURU, 9 MAY

Ankita Basappa Konnur, who topped the State by scoring a perfect 625 out of 625 in SSLC exam, was nervous as well as excited on Thursday morning like other students.

Confident in clinching the top spot at Morarji Desai Residential School in Malligeri, nestled within Mudhol taluk of Bagalkot district, this farmer's daughter eagerly awaited the results, yearning to witness the sheer joy in her parents' eyes. Yet, when the moment of truth arrived, Konnur's elation knew no bounds. Not only did she reign supreme within her school but also emerged as the unrivalled champion of the entire State, securing a flawless score in every subject.

She stands alone in achieving a perfect score across all subjects this year, a feat that has ignited waves of admiration throughout her village. Villagers flocked to her doorstep, lifting her on their shoulders in a jubilant procession that reverberated through social media platforms.

Ankita Basappa Konnur with her parents *PHOTO: PTI*

> **The pride I saw in my parents' eyes overwhelmed me, validating the countless hours of hard work**
>
> -Ankita Basappa Konnur, SSLC topper

Konnur is the daughter of Basappa Konnur, a farmer, and Geetha, a homemaker who works on their family farm occasionally.

Salar News caught up with the modest topper. "The pride I saw in my parents' eyes overwhelmed me, validating the countless hours of hard work," Konnur said.

Konnur, who has two siblings, said she wants to pursue science for pre-university. "I want to take engineering and then write Civil Services exam to serve the nation as an IAS officer. I aspire to be a beacon of hope for the children in my village."

Speaking to Salar News, Vinayak Mantur, a teacher at Morarji Desai Residential School, said, "We stand tall in the knowledge that our school has nurtured a State champion. Our school has little resources; we are hoping that the government allots better facilities so that we can produce better results."

Presently, the school, housing 250 students, grapples with limited resources, boasting only five computers.

Inspired by Konnur's success, the school fervently hopes for the establishment of smart classrooms and the procurement of additional computers. —*Salar News*

>>>More on Page 2

Poll campaign: HC stays suspension of officer

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

State High Court has stayed the suspension of BH Manjunath, a first division assistant who allegedly forwarded a message appealing to vote for BJP candidate in Hassan district. He was serving at the Deputy Director's Office of the Education Department. Following the message controversy, the District Election Officer issued an order suspending Manjunath from his duties. However, the High Court intervened, staying the suspension order pending further proceedings. A division bench led by Justice Sunil Dutt Yadav issued the stay order in response to Manjunath's plea. The court has adjourned the hearing and directed notices to be served to the defendants, including the Hassan District Election Officer and the Deputy Director of the School Education and Literacy Department. The petition asserts that Manjunath sent a pro-BJP election campaign message on 31 March, as alleged by one Nagendra Rama, who complained to the District Election Officer via email. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: SALAR

BJP: Stop feeding pigeons in front of Mysuru Palace

MYSURU, 9 MAY

BJP OBC Morcha State President Kautilya Raghu urged authorities to ban feeding pigeons near Mysuru Palace. In a letter sent to District Commissioner KV Rajendra, Raghu emphasised that this will impact the palace's aesthetics and overall upkeep. At the forefront of the issue is the practice of daily grain feeding to pigeons by individuals congregating in front of the Kote Anjaneyaswamy temple gate. Notably, the statue of Maharaja Chamarajendra Wadiyar X and its surroundings have been marred by this accumulation of waste. Moreover, Raghu underscored the adverse effects on public health, particularly for visitors and temple priests. The movement of pedestrians and vehicles has also been severely hampered, posing logistical challenges in the area. Expressing concern over the encroachment of pigeons nesting around Mysuru palace, Raghu urged action from the Mysuru District Administration, Municipal Corporation, and Department of Oriental Art and Archeology. He called for a ban on such activities within a 2 km radius of the Palace to safeguard the heritage and environmental integrity of the region. Highlighting the underlying misconception driving this practice, Raghu pointed out that some individuals feed pigeons under the belief of following spiritual merit at minimal cost. He urged for prompt action to preserve the sanctity of the heritage palace. *—Salar News*

No one filed plaint against Prajwal: NCW

NCW says one woman who reached out to them later said she was forced to file fake plaint

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

According to NCW, the Action Taken Report indicated registration of two cases based on complaints of sexual abuse by the victims **PHOTO: PTI**

- NCW said a Special Investigation Team (SIT) committee has been formed to probe the matter thoroughly

No victim has come forward to register a complaint with the National Commission for Women (NCW)against MP Prajwal Revanna, and one woman complainant who reached out to it alleged that she was forced to register a fake complaint against the JD(S) leader, the women's panel said on Thursday.

NCW said a Special Investigation Team (SIT) committee has been formed to probe the matter thoroughly. Notably, there is a commendable presence of female officers entrusted with conducting investigations and ensuring sensitivity and empathy in handling such cases, it added.

According to the NCW, the Action Taken Report (ATR) indicated the registration of two cases based on the complaints of sexual abuse by the victims, alongside an additional complaint filed for abduction by a relative. However, no victim has come forward to register a complaint with the commission in this case, it said.

"One woman complainant came to the commission to register a complaint against three individuals dressed in civil uniform, allegedly introducing themselves as State Police officials and forcing her to give a false complaint in this case," the NCW claimed.

"She stated that she is being called by random phone numbers threatening her to complaint. It has come to light that this complainant was forced by a group of individuals to file a complaint, under the threat of potential harassment and false implications. The victim has sought protection for her family's welfare, underscoring the seriousness of the situation," it said.

In a separate development, the NCW said, it has been noted that the 700 women who submitted online complaints are affiliated with a social activist group and have no direct involvement or association with the primary complainant in the case. *—PTI*

Four more detained for kidnapping of woman

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Special Investigation Team formed to probe the alleged sexual abuse cases against Hassan JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna has detained four more people in the kidnapping of a woman, sources said on Thursday.

The SIT has already arrested Prajwal's father and Holenarasipura MLA HD Revanna who is under judicial custody at the Parappana Agrahara Central Jail.

The 66-year-old Revanna is the son of former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda.

Revanna's aide Sathish Babanna was also arrested and is in police custody. Home Minister G Parameshwara on Wednesday had said that a third person had been arrested, but declined to divulge their identity citing investigation procedures.

Revanna and Babanna were arrested first for kidnapping a woman, a mother of three, from her house and keeping her under illegal detention, police sources said.

—PTI

9 Air India Express flights cancelled in City again

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

Passengers in the City yet again in soup on Thursday as Air India Express cabin crew members continuing with the sick leave leading to cancellations of nine flight operations from Kempegowda International Airport (KIA).

While talking to **Salar news** Maya Singh, a passenger who was about to fly to Mumbai on Thursday expressed her frustration with Air India Express; she said "I have not received any information about cancellations. I was supposed to fly out this morning but only after reaching there I found out that my flight was cancelled. The airline has promised a refund of my money within seven days but still I am not satisfied with the service."

> **I have not received any information about cancellations. Only after reaching there I found out that my flight was cancelled**
>
> -Maya Singh, passenger

Prajwal Desai, another passenger said, "I have been waiting since morning at the KIA to fly down to Pune for an important conference. I was waiting for a good four hours and cancelled it later on as there was no use for me to fly there after missing the conference. Is this how you treat customers?".

The airline has grounded a total of 85 flights as of Thursday. The carrier advised the passengers to check their flight status before heading to the airport.

Those impacted by cancellations or delays exceeding 3 hours are eligible for a full refund or free rescheduling on a later date. They can request this via WhatsApp(+91 6360012345) on Tia or the website. *—Salar News*

All about Air India Express and its current crisis

Air India Express is a subsidiary of Air India started in 2005 to make connectivity convenient across the country & to provide international flights with shorter hauls at a cheaper fare.

Headquarters: Gurugram, Haryana

Commenced on: 29 April, 2005

Operation and number of flights

- It operates more than 2,000 flights per week to 45 destinations across India, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.
- Air India Express and AIX Connect operate around 230 and 150 daily flights, respectively.

The owner

- Tata Sons acquired Air India and Air India Express in January 2022. This marked the return of Air India to Tata, which had founded the airline in 1932.

What are crew's grievances?

- Crew forced to share rooms during layovers due to no hotel bookings.
- Revised salary structure.
- Alleged differential treatment of experienced crew members as crew of AIX Connect given preference. Connect is merging with Air India Express.
- Management not ready to look into their issues.

How much did Tata pay?

₹18,000 cr

Service road near Nagawara flyover shut

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

Bengaluru traffic police have announced that the entry to the service road near the Nagawara flyover up ramp will be closed from Friday. Bengaluru traffic police issued an advisory for commuters travelling around Hebbal Circle as Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) will start metro-related works at Hebbal-Kodigehalli junction. In an announcement, Bengaluru traffic police said, "From 10 May, the BMRCL is aligning tracks to the metro pillars on the Kodigehalli-Hebbal Circle stretch. The movement of all vehicles from Kodigehalli junction to Esteem Mall on the service road is prohibited from 11 pm to 5 am." The commuters have been asked to take Ranna Road to go to Esteem Mall.

"The road users are advised to reach Pampa Extension Road from Dasarahalli Main Road, proceed via Ranna Road, and reach Esteem Mall via Kempapura Main Road. Large good vehicles are advised to avoid Vidyashilp junction," the announcement said.

—Salar News

BASKING IN GLORY

5 students from City among 20 SSLC exam toppers

SSLC 2nd topper in the State Medha P Shetty celebrates with her parents in Bengaluru on Thursday **PHOTO: SALAR**

Chandana P **PHOTO: SALAR**

Yashvanth TJ **PHOTO: SALAR**

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

Five students from Bengaluru are in the top 20 of Class 10 (SSLC) exams, whose results were announced by Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board on Thursday.

Medha P Shetty from Holy Child English School, Banashankari, was the topper from the City, coming second in the State. She is followed by Sourav Kaushik and Anita Anand Andewadikar from VVS Sardar Patel English School, Rajajinagar, at 9th and 10th positions. Dheeraj Preetam Reddy from St Claret High School, Jalahalli, came 11th while Manyatha S Maiya from NET Public School, Srinijagunara Road, was at 12th position.

Across the State, the pass percentage has dropped by 10 percentage points. The State recorded a pass percentage of 73.40 per cent this year, marking a dip from last year's 83.89 per cent. Ankita Basappa Konnur from Bagalkot achieved a perfect score of 625 out of 625, securing 100 per cent. Five students from the City scored 98 per cent (623) in the examination.

The exams took place from 25 March to 6 April, 2024 and around 8.5 lakh candidates — 4.36 lakh boys and 4.23 lakh girls — appeared for the examination. Of these, 2.87 lakh boys and 3.43 lakh girls have passed the exam.

CITY TOPPERS

Name	State Ranking
Medha P Shetty	2
Sourav Kaushik	9
Anita Anand Andewadikar	10
Dheeraj Preetam Reddy	11
Manyatha S Maiya	12

> **The teachers at my BBMP school gave me individual guidance to do better in exams**
>
> -Chandana P, One of the Bengaluru toppers

Students from rural areas performed better than those from urban areas in this year's exam. The pass percentage of the rural area students was recorded at 74.17 per cent (as compared to 87.38 per cent in 2023), and of urban area students was reported at 72.83 per cent (as compared to 79.62 per cent in 2022). The girls recorded a pass percentage of 81 (as compared to 87.87 per cent in 2023) and boys recorded a pass percentage of 65.90 (as compared to 80 per cent in 2023). The pass percentage of boys in this year's exam is the lowest recorded in the history of the State. Udupi topped among the districts with a pass percentage of 94, followed by Dakshina Kannada, Shivamogga, Kodagu and Uttara Kannada. Yadgir district was at the bottom in terms of pass percentage.

BBMP schools record 68 pass percentage

BBMP schools in the City achieved a pass percentage of 68 per cent. Of 2,502 students who appeared for the examination, 1,721 passed at 68.78%. Chandana P from BBMP school at Srirampura got 99 per cent, while Yashvanth TG from BBMP school at Laggere got 97 per cent in the exams.

Chandana, daughter of a clinic receptionist, told **Salar News** that she wants to be a doctor. "The teachers at my BBMP school gave me individual guidance to do better in exams," she said.

Yashvanth TJ, son of a steel factory worker and a garment worker, told **Salar News** that he aims to become a scientist. He credited the smart classes in their school for helping him understand concepts better.

—Salar News

PROBLEM SOLVERS

City-based startup extracts water from air

MEGHANA PRASAD
BENGALURU, 9 MAY

Uravu Labs founders Swapnil Srivastav and Venkatesh RY at their factory **PHOTO: SALAR**

At a time when Bengalureans are grappling with water crisis, a City-based firm has been supplying drinking water bottles to the hospitality industry by extracting water from the air.

Uravu Labs, a startup, started extracting water from the air to generate awareness about groundwater exploitation and climate change and also to shift focus towards sustainable solutions and technology. Inspired by a similar process shown in 'Star Wars' movie series, the startup is converting air to water using the process of reverse water evaporation. The machines employed, called Atmospheric Water Generators (AWGs), absorb moisture from air, filter it and condense it to collect the water.

According to a study, air has six times more water than all the rivers combined in the globe, said Swapnil Srivastav, who co-founded Uravu Labs with his friend Venkatesh RY, told **Salar News**. Every 8-10 days, the water replenishes naturally which makes it even more sustainable. "AWGs are the most reliable source of consumable water as it has zero wastage of water, whereas Reverse Osmosis (RO) units generate 2-3 litres of wastewater to produce one litre of water," Srivastav said. The AWG is eco-friendly as it uses solar energy and waste heat from other industries for its working, reducing the dependency on renewable energy.

- Uravu Labs, a startup, started extracting water from the air to generate awareness about groundwater exploitation and climate change and also to shift focus towards sustainable solutions and technology

Roughly having a height of 6 feet, the AWG can be set up anywhere, where there is a water crisis. Uravu Labs is planning to tie up with State government to reach out to more people. "To tie up with the government, we must reach a certain production rate. We are currently producing 3,000 litres of water per day and are planning to produce 1.5 to 2 lakh litres of water per day. Only then can we think of producing for a large-scale audience," Srivastav said. *—Salar News*

Man kills 6 puppies in gated community at Kanakapura Road

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

Six 10-days-old puppies were found brutally killed on Tuesday at an under-construction site of a gated community (residents have requested anonymity) on Kanakapura Main Road.

This incident has sparked outrage among animal rights activists and residents of the community. An Animal Welfare Officer, Anirudh, was called in for inspection on Thursday morning.

Speaking to **Salar News**, a resident Vijay Barade said, "Around 2 am, I heard a heart-breaking sound coming from vacant villa 123 on Monday. It was the frantic barking of dogs, their mothers and their newborn puppies. The sound filled me with worry. Then, a chilling shout from some which really shocked me."

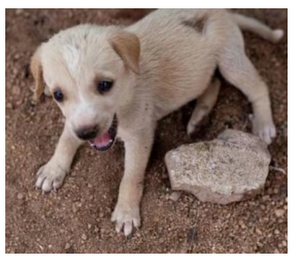


PHOTO: PTI

"The following morning, six tiny puppies, barely beginning their lives, lay lifeless. It appears someone had smashed their heads with a stone. I could see the big stone lying near one puppy. Only one puppy had miraculously survived this attack." said Barade. The mother dog, clearly traumatised by the ordeal, wouldn't allow anyone near her even after multiple attempts to feed her and calm her down.

An animal welfare officer Anirudh, was called to the scene on Thursday to investigate. "We are currently looking into this matter," Anirudh said. "We will be speaking with residents and security personnel to gather more information. Our goal is to identify those responsible for this cruelty and bring them to justice. We need as much support from the locals as we can to take this matter forward."

- Despite attempts by residents and the animal welfare officer to file an FIR at Kaggalipura police station, no FIR was registered at the time of publishing it

Despite attempts by residents and the animal welfare officer to file an FIR at Kaggalipura police station, no FIR was registered at the time of publishing it.

—Salar News

MP BJP spokesperson dies of heart attack

INDORE, 9 MAY

BJP's Madhya Pradesh unit spokesperson Govind Maloo died of a heart attack in Indore at the age of 67, a local party leader said on Thursday. Maloo suffered a massive heart attack at his home after having dinner on Wednesday night following his return from Bhopal, he said. He was rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead, he said. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav reached Indore on Thursday morning to attend the last rites of Maloo. Yadav reached the Regional Park Mukti Dham in the city and laid a wreath on Maloo's body. Describing Maloo as a "big asset of the BJP", the CM said, "I am extremely saddened by the sudden demise of Maloo due to cardiac arrest. He had discharged many responsibilities of the BJP. The day before yesterday, he was with me in Dhar in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election rally." —*PTI*

BJP leader makes minor son press EVM button

BHOPAL, 9 MAY

A BJP leader in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh was booked for allegedly taking his minor son to a polling booth in Berasia on 7 May, making him press the EVM button and videoing the process, an official said on Thursday. Taking cognisance of the incident, Bhopal collector Kaushalendra Vikram Singh suspended booth number 71 (Khitwas) polling officer Sandeep Saini and got an FIR registered against BJP zilla panchayat member Vijay Mehar, the official said. —*PTI*

Goa speaker junks Cong's plea against Kamat, Lobo

PANAJI, 9 MAY

Goa Assembly speaker Ramesh Tawadkar on Thursday dismissed a petition filed by Congress seeking disqualification of MLAs Digambar Kamat and Michael Lobo, who quit the grand old party and joined the BJP in 2022. Talking to PTI, Tawadkar confirmed that the disqualification petition filed by Goa Congress president Amit Patkar against former chief minister Kamat and Lobo has been dismissed. Patkar filed the disqualification petition against in July 2022, accusing them of conspiring to split the Opposition party and voluntarily giving up its membership. Both the MLAs were part of Congress when the petition was filed. In September 2022, Kamat and Lobo, who was then leader of Opposition in Assembly, joined BJP along with six other legislators. —*PTI*

Bengal Guv shows Raj Bhavan footage in molestation case

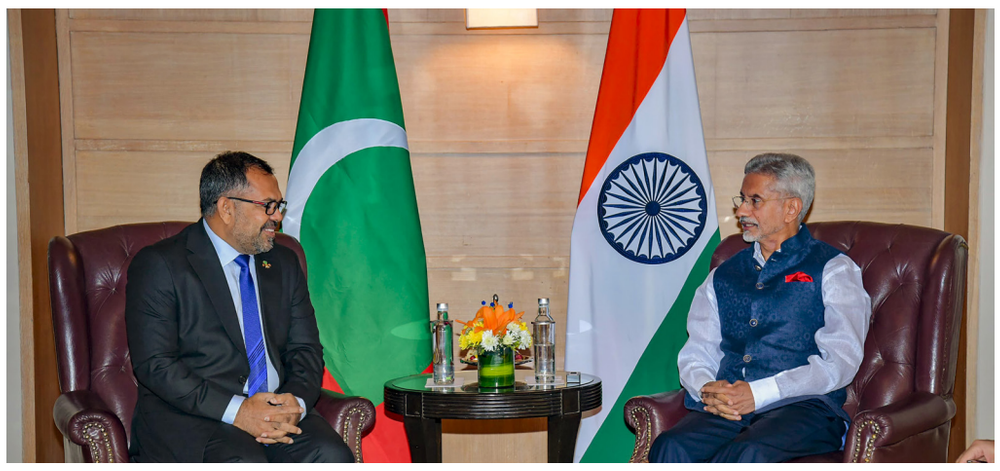
KOLKATA, 9 MAY

In the backdrop of a woman employee of Raj Bhavan levelling molestation charges against him, West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Thursday showed CCTV footage of the premises of 2 May to common people. Footage from two CCTV cameras at the main (north) gate from around 5.30pm of 2 May were shown to a few people at the Central Marble Hall on the ground floor of Raj Bhavan. A contractual woman employee of Raj Bhavan on Friday lodged a written complaint with the Kolkata Police alleging that she was molested by Bose in the Governor's house on 24 April and 2 May. Bose had on Wednesday said he would show the footage to common people, barring "politician" Mamata Banerjee and "her" police. In the over an hour-long footage, the woman, dressed in blue jeans and top, was seen going to the police outpost, with a large number of policemen deployed on Raj Bhavan premises for the scheduled visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A n official said, "At least 92 people contacted us, to see the footage. —*PTI*

This won't repeat: Maldives FM on mins slamming Modi

In a meeting with Jaishankar, he said proper action has been taken

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY



Maldives Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at a meeting, in New Delhi, on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

- The row between India and the Maldives broke out over derogatory posts made by three officials about Modi, following which the ministers were suspended

Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer, who is on his first official visit to India, has distanced his government from the derogatory remarks made by some of its ministers against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that it was not the stand of the government and that "proper action" has been taken to ensure that it is not repeated.

In an interview with ANI, Zameer reiterated the government's stance, stating, "I think if you have seen, like you said, we have said that it's not the stand of the government or it's not the view of the government. And we believe it shouldn't have been done. And then we are taking proper action to make sure that this don't repeat."

"And I think if you have seen, there has been a misunderstanding, social media mainly, but the governments of the Maldives in India, we understand what has happened and we have passed that stage now," he added.

The row between India and the Maldives broke out over derogatory posts made by three officials about Modi. Following derogatory remarks against Modi, Maldives Deputy Youth Ministers Mariyam Shiuna, Mahzoom Majid and Malsha Shareef have been suspended indefinitely, but all three will continue to receive their salaries, the President's Office has said, Maldives local media Adhadhu reported.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday conveyed to his Maldivian counterpart Moosa Zameer that the development of India-Maldives ties is based on "mutual interests" and "reciprocal sensitivity".

Providing further information about the suspensions, Maldives President's Office Communications Minister Ibrahim Khaleel told Adhadhu that the three deputy ministers were suspended indefinitely as a measure taken to look into the matter.

The Male is now facing a boycott by Indian tourists, who are one of the largest contributors to the country's income.

. In light of concerns about a potential decline in Indian tourist visits to the Maldives following the controversy, Zameer expressed the Maldivian government's eagerness to mend ties with India and reiterated their invitation to Indian tourists.

"I think the Minister of Tourism has clearly said that he would like to welcome and I like myself to welcome all Indians who would like to travel to Maldives," he said.

—*ANI/PTI*

ROW OVER COLOUR

Adhir justifies Pitroda's 'racist' comments

BAHARAMPORE, 9 MAY

- Adhir said in Hindustan, there are Proto-Australian class, N***o class, Mongoloid class

Congress' West Bengal President Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Thursday defended Sam Pitroda's "racist" comment by stating that "India too has dark-skinned people akin to the N****es".

The senior Congress leader and party's nominee from Baharampur Lok Sabha seat resonated with Pitroda, who stirred a controversy by comparing people of south and east Indian origin to Africans and Chinese respectively.

"According to the topography of our country, our regional features differ. In our Hindustan, we have Proto-Australian class, N***o class, Mongoloid class. I don't need to speak much on personal opinions," Chowdhury said at the party office here.

"That's what we are taught in schools. Not everyone looks alike. Some are black, others are white," the Congress leader said.

The controversy that followed Pitroda's comment in the wake of the ongoing general elections drove the leader to quit as the chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress.

Pitroda stoked a major controversy with his remarks during a podcast where he cited ethnic and racial identities like Chinese, Africans, Arabs and Whites to describe the physical appearance of Indians from different parts of the country.

The veteran leader was an advisor to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and has been closely associated with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, accompanying him during his foreign visits.

As the BJP made Pitroda's remarks a poll issue, the Congress acted swiftly and distanced itself from his words, calling them "most unfortunate and unacceptable".With campaigning in full swing ahead of the fourth phase of polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the BJP's all-out attack on the Congress on Pitroda's analogy and slammed his comments as "racist". He asserted that people will not tolerate the attempt to insult them on the basis of their skin colour.

—*Salar News*

Muslim numbers rising, Hindus falling: PMO

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

The share of the Hindu population decreased by 7.82 per cent between 1950 and 2015 in India, while that of Muslims increased by 43.15 per cent, suggesting that there is a conducive environment in the country to foster diversity, said a recent working paper by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).

Meanwhile, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Thursday cast doubts on the EAC-PM report, questioning how the Centre could determine the Hindu and Muslim population without even conducting a Census.

"You arrived at numbers without holding a Census? Wasn't Census due in 2021? You are the prime minister of the country... please give up your Hindu-Muslim binary and talk about issues," Yadav said

BJP in-charge of the National Information and Technology Department Amit Malviya targeted Congress over the report and said that if the country is left to Congress, then there would be no country for Hindus.

Reacting to the report, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen leader Asaduddin Owaisi on Thursday responded to the report of the Economic Advisory Council to the PM (EAC-PM) and called it a "report from Whatsapp University."

Asked about the declining share of the Hindu population, Owaisi said, "Forward me the report then I will respond. Whose report is this? Who made this report? Report from Whatsapp University. Who made this report?"

—*PTI/ANI*

Hindus fell by 7.82%, while Muslims increased by 43.15% *PHOTO: PTI*

CPI(M), TMC workers engage in heated arguments

KOLKATA, 9 MAY

CPI(M) and Trinamool Congress (TMC) supporters engaged in heated arguments with one another when their processions came face-to-face during filing of nominations in Kolkata on Thursday. The incident took place when the supporters of the archrival parties went to Alipore District Collector Office here for filing of nominations by five Left Front candidates and one TMC nominee for Lok Sabha polls.

Supporters of the two parties engaged in heated arguments and sloganeering but a large posse of police personnel stood as a barrier between them, preventing the situation from escalating, an official said. While TMC's Mala Roy is scheduled to file her nomination papers for re-election to the prestigious Kolkata Dakshin constituency, her CPI (M) opponent in the seat, Saira Shah Halim, was also there to file her papers.CPI (M)'s Srijan Bhattacharya for Jadavpur seat, Pratikur Rahaman for Diamond Harbour, Sarat Chandra Halder for Mathurapur fstituency arrived at the collector's office for filing papers. —*PTI*

OWAISI BROTHERS 'NOT SCARED'

Remove cops for 15 seconds: BJP's Navneet Rana to Owaisi

HYDERABAD, 9 MAY

Asaduddin Owaisi and Navneet Rana *PHOTO: PTI*

In a scathing attack against AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi and his brother Akbaruddin, BJP leader Navneet Rana has said if police were removed from duty for "15 seconds, the brothers would not know from where they came and where they went".

Rana's blistering attack came in response to Akbaruddin controversial speech in 2013 that it would take them only "15 minutes" to balance the "Hindu- Muslim ratio" in the country if the police were removed.

"The younger one (Akbarauddin) says, remove the police for 15 minutes and we will show what we can do. Let me tell the younger one, you will take 15 minutes, it will be only 15 seconds for us. If you remove police for 15 seconds, you won't know where you came from and where you went away," said Rana, the BJP's candidate from Maharashtra's Amravati Lok Sabha seat.

She shared a video clip of her making the comments on X.

Rana was campaigning in support of BJP's Hyderabad Lok Sabha candidate K Madhavi Latha and others in Telangana on Wednesday.

Asked about her comments, Asaduddin said he would like to tell Prime Minister Narendra Modi to give even one hour.

"Modi ji has power, give 15 seconds, rather take one hour. We also would like to see how much humanity is left or not. Who is scared? Who is stopping you? The Prime Minister is yours in Delhi. RSS is yours. Everything is yours. Tell us where to come. We will come," Owaisi told reporters.

Meanwhile, Telangana Chief Minister said that all Muslims in the country are true patriots.

"How can they make such statements? They will gain nothing by using such language. Such lowly remarks aren't good for the country. All our Muslim brothers and sisters are proud Indians and true patriots. Doing politics in the name of Hindus and Muslims is not right. These are cheap tricks to win the elections but the people are not going to fall for such ploys this time," he said.

—*PTI*

Congress and JJP step up efforts to topple BJP in Haryana

CHANDIGARH, 9 MAY

PHOTO: ANI

Congress and Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) have approached Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, stepping up their efforts to topple the Haryana's BJP after it was reduced to a minority in the state Assembly.

Haryana Congress sent a letter to the governor's office seeking time on Friday to meet him and present a memorandum on the present political situation in the state.

In a separate letter on Wednesday, JJP leader Dushyant Chautala wrote to the governor, saying the Nayab Singh Saini government no longer commands a majority and there should be an immediate floor test. Three Independent MLAs on Tuesday withdrew support to the BJP government and announced they would back the Congress.

The government which has the support of two other Independents is now two short of the majority mark in the 90-member state Assembly.

However, the House at present has an effective strength of 88 with Karnal and Rania assembly seats being vacant. BJP has 40 MLAs, Congress 30 and JJP 10 in the House.

In its letter, Congress said that a party delegation led by Deputy CLP leader Aftab Ahmed and BB Batra, chief whip CLP, wants to meet the governor on 10 May.Saini again asserted that his government was not in trouble.—*PTI*

Repolling at 4 booths in MP's Betul seat on 10 May

BETUL, 9 MAY

The Election Commission of India (ECI) ordered repolling at four booths in Madhya Pradesh's Betul Lok Sabha seat on Friday after Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were damaged when a bus ferrying them and polling officials caught fire on Tuesday night.

The order for re-election by EC came after the district administration submitted a report on the fire incident.

The repolling will be held at Rajapur, Kunda Raiyat, Chikhlimal and Dudar Raiyat of the Multai assembly segment of the parliamentary seat. The repolling is scheduled from 7 am to 6 pm. —*ANI*

TUG OF WAR

Amethi Gandhi's amanat, my win, their victory: Kishori

AMETHI, 9 MAY

Kishori Lal *PHOTO: PTI*

Congress' Amethi candidate Kishori Lal Sharma on Thursday said the BJP's claim that his party had accepted defeat in this constituency smacks of "arrogance" and asserted that his win in the Lok Sabha polls would be a victory of the Gandhi family.

In an interview with PTI here, Sharma cited the past instance of Congress leader Satish Sharma, who contested from Amethi in the 1990s, making way for Sonia Gandhi to contest from the constituency, and said he would do the same if such a situation arises in the future.

Sharma had won the Amethi seat in 1991 and 1996 but lost in 1998 and moved to Rae Bareli in 1999 with Sonia Gandhi contesting and winning Amethi.

This time, Rahul Gandhi is contesting the Lok Sabha election from the Rae Bareli seat, while Sharma, a close aide of the Gandhi family, has been fielded from the Amethi Lok Sabha seat.

Sharma had been an MP for both Rae Bareli and Amethi, looking after the two Gandhi family bastions.

On the BJP's jibes that Rahul "ran away" because he was scared of losing from Amethi, Sharma said those who were born after Independence do not know the history of the Gandhi family.

"Neither the Gandhis ran away during the time of the Britishers nor have they run away now or will so in the future," he said. —*PTI*

Priyanka's clerk: BJP man mocks Cong's Rae Bareli pick

RAE BARELI, 9 MAY

Priyanka Gandhi *PHOTO: X/ PRIYANKAGANDHI*

The BJP's Rae Bareli candidate Dinesh Pratap Singh has accused the Gandhi family of harbouring "hatred" for Rae Bareli-Amethi, and asked why they did not field a local leader but opted for "Priyanka Gandhi's clerk" to contest the Lok Sabha polls from Amethi.

Singh, who is taking on Rahul Gandhi in a high-profile electoral contest here, also claimed that the Gandhi scion will lose by a bigger margin than his mother Sonia Gandhi had won in the 2019 polls.

" People of Rae Bareli trust the prime minister," Singh told PTI in an interview here.

"So, in such a scenario, I don't think the Congress candidate will be able to hold his ground before the BJP candidate in Rae Bareli," he said.

Asked about Priyanka Gandhi Vadra camping in Rae Bareli and campaigning for her brother Rahul, Singh said it could be a topic of discussion for media people who have come from outside but her camping here was a non-issue for the people of Rae Bareli. "In 2022 assembly polls, she stayed here and asked for votes in every nook and corner, but in all the assembly seats Priyanka Gandhi camped here and ran around, about 16,000 votes were bagged in assembly segments. Is it the same Priyanka Gandhi?" he said, taking a swipe at the Congress general secretary.

"In Rae Bareli, Indira Gandhi suffered a crushing defeat. Those who say Congress has not lost, they should be told that Rae Bareli is the land of the people who did not let the Britishers occupy," he said.

—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

4 dead after inhaling fumes in septic tank in UP

CHANDAULI, 9 MAY

Four people, including three labourers, died after inhaling toxic gas while cleaning a 15-year-old septic tank in the New Mahal area in Chandauli in Uttar Pradesh, police said. According to officials, police arrived at the spot and and sent the bodies for a post-mortem. As per local people, all three labourers who entered the septic tank one by one became unconscious after inhaling toxic gas. The landlord's son, who had entered the tank to save the three workers, also fainted. Four of them were declared dead when they were brought to the hospital. Sub-Divisional Magistrate Viraj Pandey said, "The cleaning of the sewer was ongoing at the residence of one Bharat Jaiswal. District Administration will provide Rs 4 lakh ex gratia to each of the deceased." — *ANI*

Man kills father, drowns in pond with 5-yr-old son

JAIPUR, 9 MAY

A man allegedly strangulated his father over a family dispute and then jumped in a pond along with his 5-year-old son in Rajasthan's Pali area, police said on Thursday. The incident occurred in the Kulthana village on Wednesday night, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Pali Rural, Ratnaram Dewasi said. Prakash Patel,30, allegedly strangulated his father Durgaram Patel,65, over a dispute regarding his divorce, the DSP said. After killing his father, Prakash with his son Rahul allegedly committed suicide by jumping into a pond. Their bodies were fished out on Thursday morning, he said. A case was registered and the bodies were sent for post-mortem, he added. —*PTI*

Nine including children bit by dogs in Kochi

KOCHI, 9 MAY

Around nine people, including children, were bitten by a dog, suspected to be a pet, near Muvattupuzha here on Thursday. Initially the dog bit the children coming out from a madrassa at around 9am, Muvattupuzha Municipality chairperson PP Eldhose said. Later the canine bit several others in the area, he said, adding that it was caught around 1.50pm after concerted efforts by locals, municipality officials and members and the police. The dog is suspected to be the pet of a local resident who owns several canines, Eldhose said. Eldhose further said that initially the owner admitted it was his pet and then later claimed that he only fed it. "According to one of the veterinarians, it is not vaccinated either," the municipality chairperson said. —*PTI*

Cops seize ₹8.36 crore at inter-state check-post in Andhra

GARIKAPADU, 9 MAY

Andhra Pradesh Police on Thursday seized Rs 8.36 crore from a truck carrying PVC pipes at an inter-state check-post in NTR district. Police seized the money, which is one of the largest single cash seizures in the run-up to 2024 polls, at Andhra Pradesh and Telangana inter-state check-post at Garikapadu village while checking vehicles."We seized Rs 8.36 crore cash hidden in a cabin behind the driver's seat in the truck coming from Hyderabad and bound for Guntur," a police official told PTI. According to police, the truck belonging to Chittoor district is registered under the name of one Shaik Aziz. Meanwhile, police are questioning the truck driver, Ch Shanmugan (40), and cleaner, P Sekhar Reddy,24, for further information. —*PTI*

Ahmedabad Sufi saint & kin's graves razed, 35 held

Stone pelting took place between 2 communities during clash

AHMEDABAD, 9 MAY

Police have arrested 35 people in connection with a clash that broke out between two groups after the graves of a Sufi saint and his family members were flattened at the Pirana shrine located on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, an official said on Thursday.

During the clash that occurred on Tuesday night, members of two communities pelted each other with stones, which resulted in some people getting injured, he said.

The Pirana shrine is managed by the Imamshah Bawa Roza Trust that has been a symbol of the Hindu-Muslim amity, with members from both the communities being its trustees.

"Due to some differences, one of the trustees razed to the ground the graves of Sufi saint Imamshah Bawa and his family members at the Pirana shrine on Tuesday night, leading to members of two communities hurling stones at each other," Ahmedabad (Rural) Superintendent of Police Omprakash Jat said.

After the incident, complaints were filed from both sides against unidentified individuals PHOTO: PIXABAY

When the matter came to light, people from both the communities gathered at the shrine in large numbers late at night. A team of police also rushed to the spot to bring the situation under control and maintain law and order, he said.

"But the two sides started pelting each other with stones, leaving some persons, including police personnel, getting injured," he said.

- The Pirana shrine is managed by the Imamshah Bawa Roza Trust that has been a symbol of the Hindu-Muslim amity, with members from both the communities being its trustees

After the incident, complaints were filed from both sides against unidentified individuals, he said.

"The police have arrested 35 people in this connection under sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) pertaining to attempt to murder, rioting and damage to public property, among others," Jat said.

The police carried out patrolling in the area and the situation was brought under control, he said. —*PTI*

AMID POLLS

Row erupts as cops reschedule political activities in Sopore

SRINAGAR, 9 MAY

A senior police officer's order seeking the rescheduling of political activities in north Kashmir's Sopore has sparked a controversy with the National Conference accusing the UT administration of bias and obstructing a fair electoral process.

Sopore falls within the Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency that will go to polls on 20 May in the fifth phase of the seven phase parliamentary polls. NC leader and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is contesting the seat.

On 8 May, the office of Senior Superintendent of Police in Sopore, Divya D, issued an official directive to the additional district magistrate, outlining the rescheduling of various political activities in the area.

The order specified the postponement of a car rally from 9 to 18 May, and the rescheduling of a political rally in Rafiabad from 10 to 18 May, while no new date was provided for a May 12 gathering in Behrampora -- all of which would see the participation of Abdullah, who has been actively campaigning in the region.While campaigning for the Lok Sabha seat is scheduled to end at 5pm on 18 May, NC is planning to move the Election Commission to seek its intervention.

NC leader and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is contesting the Sopore seat PHOTO: PTI

The order also mentioned the cancellation of a People's Conference rally in Rafiabad, to be addressed by local party workers.Sajad Lone, who is the chief of a faction of the People's Conference, is contesting from Baramulla. Another faction of the party is led by his brother Bilal Lone, who is a part of the moderate separatist amalgam Hurriyat Conference. —*PTI*

ARMY KILLS 3 TERRORISTS IN KULGAM OP

KULGAM, 9 MAY

The Indian Army has concluded "Operation Redwani Payeen," eliminating three terrorists after a vigil of 40 hours, officials said on Thursday.

In a post on X from the Indian Army's Chinar Corps official handle, it was said, "A joint operation that commenced on the intervening night of 6-7 May in the general area of Redwani Payeen, Kulgam, has been concluded after a relentless vigil of approximately 40 hours. Four terrorists have been eliminated along with the recovery of war-like stores, inflicting yet another hit on the terror ecosystem."

"The Chinar Corps remains committed to maintaining peace and tranquility in Kashmir," it added.

Meanwhile, security forces neutralised the third terrorist in the Redwani Payeen area of south Kashmir's Kulgam on Wednesday. —*ANI*

IN UTTARAKHAND

5 killed in forest fire, 1300 hectares of land affected

DEHRADUN, 9 MAY

Uttarakhand's Chief Conservator of Forest with an additional charge of Head of Forest Force (HoFF) Dhananjay Mohan said that the situation of Uttarakhand forest fires was under control. He confirmed that five people have lost their lives in the raging forest fires and 1300 hectares of forest area were affected.

He said that in the Garhwal division, forest fires are still taking place and in Almora also some parts are affected.

He further said, "Any kind of negligence regarding forest fire will not be tolerated, in view of this, major action has been taken against 17 personnel, and 10 people have been suspended."

The Supreme Court (SC) expressed concern on Wednesday about the fire in the forest of Uttarakhand and said that cloud seeding, depending on rain, was not the answer to stop the fire.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Sandeep Mehta said cloud seeding, depending on rain not the answer and the government has to take preventive measures. The bench

PHOTO: PTI

while expressing concern about the fire in the forest said that photographs and videos of the fire are going viral.

Earlier, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Wednesday reviewed the measures being taken to prevent forest fires and preparations regarding the upcoming monsoon season. The Chief Minister directed that all the secretaries should be given the responsibility of different districts to completely stop the forest fire. All the secretaries should go to the respective districts and do a field inspection of the areas affected by forest fire and take effective steps to stop the forest fire. He directed all the District Magistrates to take public cooperation for effective prevention of forest fire. —*ANI*

ICMR says avoid protein supplements

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

The Indian Council of Medical Research has urged to avoid protein supplements for building body mass and has recommended restricting salt intake, minimising sugar and ultra-processed foods and reading information on food labels to make informed and healthy food choices.

The Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) under the apex health research body on Wednesday released revised 'Dietary Guidelines for Indians (DGIs)' to meet the requirements of essential nutrients and prevent non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

The DGIs have been drafted by a multi-disciplinary committee of experts led by Dr Hemalatha R, Director, ICMR-NIN and have undergone several scientific reviews. Seventeen guidelines have been listed in it.

In the DGIs, the NIN stated that prolonged intake of large amounts of protein powders or consumption of high protein concentrate has been associated with potential dangers such as bone mineral loss and kidney damage. —*PTI*

AFTER EXAM, NEET ASPIRANT TELLS PARENTS HE IS 'LEAVING FOR 5 YEARS'

KOTA, 9 MAY

"I don't want to study further. I won't take any wrong steps. I am leaving home for five years."This was the message that a 19-year-old NEET aspirant sent to his parents before he went missing from his room here, police said on Thursday.

Rajendra Prasad Meena, a Gangapur city resident in Rajasthan, has been studying in a coaching institute for the last three years, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Yogesh Sharma said.

On 6 May, a day after taking the NEET exam, Meena sent a text message to his parents saying that he did not want to study any further and was leaving home for five years. He said no one should contact him as he would break his SIM and sell the mobile phone. He had Rs 8,000 with him. If need be, he would contact his family and other relatives, the DSP said. Meena further urged his mother not to worry about and he assured that he will not take any wrong step, DSP said. Following this, Meena's kin rushed to the PG and filed a missing person report at the Vigyan Nagar police station.

During the investigation, the PG owner and caretaker Kalpana Sharma said that Meena was a joyous man and before leaving his room, he cleared all his pending dues. —*PTI*

UP: Couple and 2 sisters found dead in 2 separate cases

AMROHA/ BAREILLY, 9 MAY

The body of a 32-year-old man was found hanging from the scaffold, while the body of his wife was found at some distance in a semi-nude condition here after he had informed the police that four people had threatened to kill him, officials said on Thursday. Their six-year-old daughter was found sleeping on the loft, police said.

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Rajeev Singh said the bodies were found in a field in the Hasanpur Kotwali area on Wednesday morning. The victims were identified as Munesh Khadagvanshi and his 30-year-old wife Pravesh. Munesh was a resident of Allipur Milak village and had gone to his sister's house in a nearby village in Fatehpur Batupura on Tuesday.

Body of a 32-year-old man was found hanging from the scaffold, while the body of his wife was found in a semi-nude conditions PHOTO: PIXABAY

2 sisters found dead under suspicious circumstances

Bodies of two sisters, including a minor, were found under suspicious circumstances in Bareilly district, police said on Thursday.

The father of the duo has filed a police complaint against one of his neighbours accusing him of molesting and harassing his daughters on numerous occasions. He also alleged that the neighbour and his sister-in-law allegedly forced his daughters to commit suicide.

Additional Superintendent of Police Mukesh Chandra Mishra said the bodies of the duo were found in their house on Wednesday night. While one of them was hanging from the ceiling, the other was on the ground.

Their father told police that he and his wife had left home in the morning to work in their field. When they returned in the evening, they found the bodies.

A vial of poison was also found at the spot, he said in his complaint.The father alleged that his neighbour had been harassing his daughters for a long time and would even molest them along with his friends. —*ANI/PTI*

DANGER TO HUMANS

Poultry has high antimicrobial resistance

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

A new study has found high levels of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the poultry farm environment in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, raising serious concerns about the impact on human health.

Researchers from NGOs Toxics Link and World Animal Protection collected 14 poultry litter and groundwater samples from six poultry farms for the study.

Eleven of these samples showed an alarming presence of antimicrobial resistance genes (ARG) against 15 important antibiotics, including glycopeptides, carbapenems, and macrolides.

Surveys conducted by Toxics Link found that poultry farmers are using antibiotics indiscriminately due to a general lack of awareness and understanding of the possible consequences.

Despite the recommendation of the Bureau of Indian Standards to not use antibiotic growth promoters (AGPs) in poultry feeds, these continue to be available in the markets and used by poultry farmers.

Surveys found that poultry farmers are using antibiotics indiscriminately due to a general lack of awareness PHOTO: PIXABAY

Colistin, a last-resort antibiotic drug for treating multi-drug-resistant infections, banned for use in food-producing animals by the Union Ministry of Health in 2019, is still being sold through online platforms.

ARGs are genetic facilitators of AMR which causes bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites to no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines. Although naturally occurring, ARGs in the environment have increased in recent years due to anthropogenic activities leading to overuse and misuse of antimicrobials across different sectors.

This has led to diseases such as pneumonia, gonorrhoea, post-operative infections, HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria becoming increasingly untreatable.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), at least seven lakh people die each year due to drug-resistant diseases, including more than two lakh people who die from multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis.India accounts for three per cent of the global consumption of antimicrobials in food animals and has one of the highest intensity of antimicrobial usage (AMU) rates in the livestock sector.

As the country intensifies its animal farming practices to meet food insecurity, there are growing concerns about the poultry sector emerging as a new hotspot for antimicrobial resistance. AMR can spread through various routes, including contact with animals or their products and contaminated food, thereby increasing the risk of infection for veterinarians, farmers, and food handlers. —*PTI*

Rape victims pass class 10 boards with flying colours

HYDERABAD, 9 MAY

Demonstrating remarkable grit and determination in the face of severe trauma, two minor rape victims in Telangana have recently passed the Class 10 examination with flying colours, results of which were recently announced in the state. The journey of younger girl (aged 15) is extremely shocking as she was raped by her own father in 2023.

This was discovered when her grandmother took her to a hospital when she complained of stomach pain, where doctors found out that she was pregnant.

To make matters worse, her pregnancy could not be aborted as it was in an advanced stage. She delivered a baby in the ninth month, M Mahender Reddy, a police officer, who dealt with both cases, told PTI recently.

The baby was admitted to an orphanage and the girl continued her education, he added.Despite these tribulations, she passed the class X standard examination with a 5.6 GPA (grade point average).

PHOTO: PIXABAY

The father was handed out a conviction with life imprisonment by the court which also awarded a compensation of Rs 15 lakh to the girl, Reddy said.

The other girl (aged 16) was raped by her uncle, Reddy said. She secured an impressive 9.3 GPA in the class X standard exams. In view of the heinous crime committed by her uncle, the girl's relatives stayed away from the family.

However, they congratulated her after her success in the X standard exam, he said.

Interestingly, both the girls now aspire to become police officers as their fear of police has vanished after they were helped by the Meerpet police station to get justice. —*PTI*

PARALYMPICS TO SPACE

Former Paralympian John McFall John McFall, who is working with European Space Agency on a ground-breaking study to see if it's feasible for someone with a physical disability to live and work in space, takes a spin in a giant centrifuge. John's an amputee, he lost the lower part of his right leg in a motorcycle accident when he was 19

PHOTO: ESA

Should India take from the rich, give to the poor?

Narendra Modi has accused Rahul Gandhi and the Opposition of plotting to handover wealth from Hindu households to Muslims ***PHOTO: PTI***

As the world's largest — and one of its most unequal — democracies votes in a mammoth national election, a new debate has gripped the campaigns of both Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP and Opposition Congress.

At the heart of this latest political slugfest is the idea of a potential redistribution of wealth. But while Congress has alluded to the need for some resources to be reallocated to traditional marginalised economic and caste-based communities, Modi and BJP have accused Opposition of plotting to hand over wealth from Hindu households to Muslims.

So what's the controversy about and what do economists say about the proposals for a relook at India's wealth distribution?

What is the controversy about?

In April, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said if voted to office, Congress would conduct a caste census along with an economic and institutional survey to determine who owns what and earns how much. Following this, a portion of the Rs 16 trillion of benefits given to 22 big businessmen by the Modi government would be transferred to 90 per cent of the country's people, as a starting point for delivering social justice, he said.

Gandhi described the caste census as an "X-ray" into Indian society. "This is not a political issue for me, this is my life mission," Gandhi said.

Yet, responding to Gandhi's speech, Modi has been repeating in election rallies that Congress has hatched a "deep conspiracy" to snatch the wealth of people and gold of Hindu women to distribute it among Muslims, whom he described as "infiltrators" and "those who have more children".

Whose wealth and how much?

India is the fastest-growing major economy in the world, but also suffers from deepening inequality. Numerous studies have shown that the benefits of India's brisk growth have been unevenly distributed.

A new study by researchers at the World Inequality Lab shows that income and wealth inequality in India today is, in many ways, worse than it was even under British colonial rule. India's richest 1 per cent control 22.6 per cent of national income and more than 40 per cent of the country's wealth. Meanwhile, the bottom 50 per cent control less than 10 per cent of national wealth.

Inequality was worsened over the past decade of Modi's rule. India has 271 dollar billionaires, third behind only China and the US — and world's highest number of poor at 228.9 million, according to Oxfam India. Congress has accused the Modi government of 'crony capitalism' and favouring certain businesses in government contracts.

The government has denied the accusations saying it has not favoured companies and has instead invested in welfare programmes to improve the lives of the poor.

Will wealth redistribution help?

There is no one view among economists. Those against the idea say redistribution will be counterproductive by taking capital from wealth generators thereby handicapping and disincentivising them to contribute to the economy.

But others argue that redistribution is required not only in wealth but also in opportunities like education, healthcare, access to financial resources, water and energy, which will boost poor people's capacity to generate income and reduce inequality in the long run. Redistribution of income and wealth is a very good idea in contemporary India, said Deepankar Basu, economics professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. "The high and rising level of economic inequality suggests that the system does not work equally for all. The wealth and income being generated by the system is predominantly being cornered by the rich," said Basu.

"Not only does this have economic implications, but it also distorts the democratic process — extreme wealth inequality allows the super-wealthy to disproportionately influence the political process through various channels like campaign contributions and donations to political parties. This erodes the democratic system of governance."

What's the politics around it?

Congress is arguing that data from a caste-based census will help with the implementation of welfare and social security schemes. The party has promised to raise a Supreme Court-mandated cap on reservations in higher education and government jobs for underprivileged groups called Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

If successful, this political pitch could in theory help Congress break BJP's growing stranglehold over the Hindu vote across castes and sub-communities. Modi, in turn, has responded by alleging that the Congress wants to give Muslims benefits that are meant to be allocated on caste — not religious — lines.

What about inheritance tax?

In an 24 April television interview, Sam Pitroda, an adviser to the Nehru-Gandhi family and head of the overseas wing of the Congress, added another twist to the debate by arguing that India should debate whether an inheritance tax might help reduce wealth inequality. Modi has responded by accusing Congress of plotting a wealth and inheritance tax that would snatch away people's wealth accumulated through hard work.

What is an inheritance tax?

An inheritance tax, also known as estate tax or death duty in some countries, is a levy imposed on the total value of money and property of a deceased person before it is passed on to their heirs. Generally, this tax is determined by assessing the value of the assets remaining after certain exemptions or deductions.

Essentially, the government collects a share of the wealth transferred from the deceased to their beneficiaries. There is no estate duty or inheritance tax payable in India. Estate duty on property that is passed on to the legal heirs on the death of a person was removed in 1985 by the then Congress government of Rajiv Gandhi — Rahul's father — citing the need to simplify the tax system and promote investment and saving.

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

SALAR ساہ

Absence of effective Muslim leadership and its causes

Mohammad Adeeb

The partition of India on 15 August, 1947, not only divided the land but also led to a significant division within the Muslim community. On 16 August, those Muslims who chose to remain in India—driven by their devotion to Mahatma Gandhi, admiration for Maulana Azad, and trust in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership—suddenly found themselves relegated to second-class citizenship and branded as criminals in their own country. They were unfairly blamed for the partition. It's a tragic irony that the very efforts spanning a millennium to conceive the idea of India were dashed in an instant. Despite the sacrifices made from 1857 to 1947, those who migrated to Pakistan left their compatriots to face an uncertain future.

However, the Muslims who stayed in India, motivated by their loyalty to Gandhi, admiration for Nehru, and respect for Maulana Azad, remained convinced that they had made the right choice. Nonetheless, the political landscape was fraught with tension. When India gained independence, there were 12 states, nine of which recommended Patel as Prime Minister, while 3 suggested Kirpalani. None supported Nehru. Yet, Gandhi intervened and appointed Nehru, citing his popularity and public appeal.

This decision disappointed Patel and his supporters, who felt sidelined. Patel assumed the role of managing the state while Nehru took the helm as Prime Minister. Patel appointed chief ministers across the states, his disillusionment with the Muslim community lingered. Meanwhile, Nehru continued to enjoy widespread support among Muslims, as evidenced by Maulana Hufzur Rahman's unwavering faith in Nehru when he boldly declared in Parliament that in times of trouble or calamity, he would remain silent while Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru would speak on his behalf.

Congress, however, faced internal challenges. Many members defected to the RSS, with Patel emerging as their leader. The ensuing riots, largely orchestrated by the RSS according to government commissions, further weakened Congress.

The progression of events that led to the rise of BJP and the marginalisation of Muslims is a complex tale of political maneuvering and shifting allegiances. It began with the JP movement, where the RSS found a platform to gain recognition. As Muslims rallied behind VP Singh's government in opposition to Congress, BJP capitalized on the opportunity to solidify its position nationally.

In the pursuit of weakening Congress, Muslims unwittingly bolstered BJP's strength. Despite their efforts, Congress weakened, giving rise to smaller familial parties, while Muslims found themselves pushed to the fringes of political relevance.

The advent of Narendra Modi in 2014 marked a significant turning point. His anti-incumbency stance against Congress, promises of job creation, and vision for a "New India" resonated with disillusioned voters, including the youth. Modi's victory signaled a shift in the political landscape, wherein ruling without Muslim representation became conceivable, contrary to the belief held for decades.

Maulana Azad's assertion that Hindus and Muslims are intertwined in the fabric of Indian society was forgotten amidst the growing perception of Muslims as a burden. Political parties, including Congress and others, attempted to appease Hindu sentiments by sidelining Muslims and adopting Hindu-centric agendas.

The erosion of Muslim influence was exacerbated by the absence of cohesive leadership after the demise of prominent figures like Maulana Ali Mian, Qari Tayyab Sahib, Dr Mehmood, Dr Faridi, and Sheikh Abdullah. Organisations aimed at safeguarding Muslim interests lost their efficacy over time, leaving Muslims feeling marginalised and voiceless in their own land.

Despite these challenges, the 2024 election presents a ray of hope. Muslims are realizing the importance of actively participating in the political process to safeguard constitutional values. By aligning with parties committed to upholding the Constitution, Muslims can reclaim their agency and contribute to the re-liberation of India.

It falls upon Muslim leadership to unite the community and chart a course of active participation rather than passive submission. This election serves as an opportunity for Muslims to assert their presence and ensure that their voices are heard in shaping the nation's future.

Mohammad Adeeb is the Chairman of Indian Muslim for Civil Rights and former Rajya Sabha MP. Author's views are personal.

The partition of India on 15 August, 1947, not only divided the land but also led to a significant division within the Muslim community ***PHOTO: WIKICOMMONS***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Prime reason for water crisis is lack of rainwater harvesting in cities

Bengaluru had mandated rainwater harvesting in residential areas ***PHOTO:PTI***

Even as Bengaluru reels from water crisis, other cities in the country have started hitting the headlines for the same reason. It is very clear that the prime reason for the water stress in Bengaluru is that the city did not value its rainwater endowment. Lakes were lost across the years and the city expanded and continued to extract the ground water.

Bengaluru's efforts

The City of Bengaluru had mandated rainwater harvesting in residential colonies since 2010. In 2021, the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) passed an amendment bill making it mandatory for buildings on the sites measuring 60x40 feet and more. Till date, 190,000 properties have installed a rainwater harvesting system says the website of BWSSB.

"We have also mandated rainwater harvesting for new properties which are 40 feet x 30 feet in size," Rajiv KN, chief engineer, BWSSB said.

Almost all the buildings — both residential and commercial with mentioned specification — have installed rainwater harvesting systems. Only some 10,000 properties are left out now, he added. BWSSB is penalising citizens for not harvesting rain.

People who have opted out either have insufficient space or land dispute, the engineer shared. "In the last 2-3 months, we received huge many requests for setting up rainwater harvesting — all this happened due to our awareness campaigns."

BWSSB claimed that it has kept no stone unturned for promoting rainwater harvesting across the city. Training programmes for different stakeholders, setting up of demonstration sites, awareness or 'Abhiyana' programmes have been regularly conducted, board officials said.

Over the last 150 days, we have not received any rain, according to Rajiv. This is why the impact of groundwater recharge is not visible, he added.

Communities are losing interest in rainwater harvesting due to lack of space in their households and high installation cost, said Vishwanath S, founder and director, Biome Environmental Solutions. More of community-level systems should be promoted instead of household-level systems, he suggested.

Few of the rapid actions of BWSSB in April very clearly showed that the the board realised they were falling short of harvesting rainwater in the city. At the end of April, BWSSB announced formation of a task force with the experts from IISc Bengaluru, Central Groundwater Board (CGWB) and Karnataka Groundwater Authority (KGWA), to monitor the groundwater across the city regularly with the help of artificial intelligence-driven groundwater monitoring system.

But what was the plan all about? A senior scientist, who did not want to be named, said, "Earlier, the monitoring network was managed by CGWB and Karnataka Water Authority (KGWA). But now, BWSSB is planning to have their own monitoring network, to which they have formed the groundwater task force."

The board will also instal automatic sensors in a large number of places to make this method successful, the source mentioned. "We will develop a ward-level database that will help us to make better decisions regarding groundwater recharge."

The new monitoring systems have been attached to 10-15 borewells as pilot projects, Rajiv noted.

> Ramachandra explained that the idea of filling the lake is not new for Bengaluru. This is because, the engineer explained, rainwater from open spaces and parks automatically drains into lakes because of the city's undulating surfaces. Then, the new initiative is redundant, he said.

BWSSB also rushed to announce that the extra rainwater from the tech parks and the community buildings will not go into drains but will be used to fill up nearby lakes. The board has planned to recharge 74 lakes, starting with 16 in May and June during the first phase, according to official sources.

Ramachandra explained that the idea of filling the lake is not new for Bengaluru. This is because, the engineer explained, rainwater from open spaces and parks automatically drains into lakes because of the city's undulating surfaces. Then, the new initiative is redundant, he said. Only time will tell whether these recent endeavours by BWSSB will be benficial or only prove to be white elephants.

Pioneer Chennai slips

Chennai is another city that claims to be a leader in urban rainwater harvesting. Pradheeps Muthulingan, an environmental expert at Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA), stated: "In 2002, CDMA mandated the inclusion of rainwater harvesting system designs in building plans as a prerequisite for construction permits. This proactive measure has significantly contributed to sustainable water management in Chennai."

Despite seasonal declines in groundwater levels, particularly during summers resulting in water scarcity, the government's initiative has notably replenished water levels through the implementation of the RWH system, Muthulingan added. Later on, the Tamil Nadu Combined Development Building Rules of 2019, introduced RWH design guidelines.

Lakes, ponds and temple tanks are our traditional rain harvesting structures that also need to be rejuvenated using nature-based solutions, said Janakranjan, retired professor of Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai.

—Courtesy Downtoearth

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

B'desh combat trainer jet crashes; 2 pilots rescued

DHAKA, 9 MAY

A combat trainer jet of the Bangladesh Air Force crashed in a river in the port city of Chattogram on Thursday and the two pilots who parachuted were rescued, the state media reported. "A YAK 130 training fighter of the Bangladesh Air Force crashed at Patenga in Chattogram due to mechanical failure. Two pilots of the plane were rescued," said a statement released by Inter-Services Public Relations. The aircraft crashed around 11 am into the Karnaphuli River and landed near the Boat Club in Patenga, said Chattogram Metropolitan Police Port Zone Deputy Commissioner Shakila Sultana. The injured pilots, who deplaned by parachutes, were taken to the Combined Military Hospital, the official BSS News quoted. *—PTI*

SL to hold prez election between 17 Sept and 16 Oct

COLOMBO, 9 MAY

Sri Lanka will hold presidential Election between 17 September and 16 October, the country's top electoral body announced on Thursday. In a notice signed by its chairman RMAL Ratnayake, the Election Commission said it will call for nominations to hold the Presidential election within the specified timeframe in terms of the provisions of the Constitution, according to local media reports. It said that the presidential election will be held on a day between 17 September and 16 October. President Ranil Wickremesinghe is expected to contest the presidential election under a new symbol, his top aide said last month. In May 2022,Wickremesinghe replaced Mahinda Rajapaksa as prime minister following anti-government protests over the unprecedented economic crisis in Lanka. *—PTI*

Australia backs gas until '2050 and beyond'

SYDNEY, 9 MAY

Australia has announced it will ramp up its extraction and use of gas until "2050 and beyond", despite global calls to phase out fossil fuels. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's government says the move is needed to shore up domestic energy supply while supporting a transition to net zero. But critics argue the move is a rejection of science, pointing to the International Energy Agency (IEA) call for "huge declines in the use of coal, oil and gas" to reach climate targets. Australia - one of the world's largest exporters of liquefied natural gas - has also said the policy is based on "its commitment to being a reliable trading partner". *—BBC News*

Indian-origin scammer gets 8 years for duping 6

SINGAPORE, 9 MAY

An Indian-origin scammer was on Thursday sentenced to eight years in prison for duping six people of more than SGD2.85 million (USD 2.10 million). Murlidharan Muhundan, 47, cheated his victims through a series of "fees", "commissions" and other fictitious payments after claiming that he could help them recover their money, The Straits Times newspaper reported. The victims had already suffered losses in earlier investments. The Singaporean, who committed the offences between June 2020 and October 2022, pleaded guilty on 5 to 18 April counts of cheating involving more than SGD1 million (USD 7,37,036). Another 40 similar charges linked to the remaining amount were considered during sentencing. In earlier proceedings, the prosecution said Murlidharan had earned the trust of his victims, who were between 57 and 77 years old. *—PTI*

2,30,000 displaced after floods in Brazil

At least 100 people have died and 138 injured

Gremio Arena and surrounding areas have been flooded after heavy rain in Porto Alegre, Brazil *PHOTO: AP/PTI*

RIO, 9 MAY

The death toll from tremendous flooding in southern Brazil has reached 100, the local civil defence agency said, as emergency crews continued to search for dozens of missing people.

Nearly 400 municipalities have been affected after days of heavy rains swamped the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. The floodwaters injured hundreds of people and forced 2,30,000 others from their homes as of Wednesday, while the state civil defence authority said 128 people were still missing. Brazil's national centre for natural disasters said the southern part of the state was under "high risk" of more floods throughout the day. It said rainfall was expected to restart, and although it was not expected to be significant in volume terms, water levels are already high in many places and the soil is saturated.

Many residents have no access to drinking water or electricity – or even the means to call for help with telephone and internet services down in many places.

State Governor Eduardo Leite warned earlier this week that the human toll was likely to rise as "the emergency is continuing to develop" in the state capital of Porto Alegre and other areas.

Army Gen Marcelo Zucco, one of the coordinators of rescue operations, told the AP his team is working at full speed before heavy rains that are forecast to hit the Porto Alegre area this weekend. Moderate rain was falling Wednesday afternoon in the city. "We hope the next rains are not like those we saw, but there's no way to be sure there won't be trouble ahead of us," Zucco said.

"At this moment we are focusing on finishing rescue operations and starting logistical support to the population. That's bringing water, medication, food and transportation for the sick to some hospital," the general added.

He also said some improvement in conditions for the day helped his men finally access some areas by land. A report by the National Confederation of Municipalities estimates damages at 4.6 billion reais (USD 930 million) in nearly 80% of Rio Grande do Sul's municipalities.

Gov Leite has said that the enormous impact will require something akin to the Marshall Plan for Europe's post-WWII recovery. Already the state has asked the federal government to suspend debt payments and create a fund for the southern region. *—AP/ Al Jazeera*

Half of Gaza's water facilities damaged

GAZA CITY, 9 MAY

Hundreds of Gaza's water and sanitation facilities have been damaged or destroyed since Israel began military action against Hamas, satellite analysis by BBC Verify has found. Damage to a major supplies depot has also severely disrupted repairs.

The lack of clean water and flows of untreated sewage pose a serious threat to health, say aid agencies. The Israel Defense Forces told BBC that Hamas cynically exploits civilian infrastructure for terror purposes.

The destruction comes despite Israel's duty to protect critical infrastructure under the rules of war, unless there is evidence sites are being used for military reasons, say human rights lawyers. Clean water has always been a limited resource in Gaza and the territory has largely relied on a system of boreholes and desalination plants for its supply.

Our analysis found that more than half of these vital facilities have been damaged or destroyed since Israel launched its retaliation in Gaza after Hamas attacked on 7 October. *—BBC News*

Houthi rebels claim 2 attacks

The attacks were conducted on MSC Diego, MSC Gina *PHOTO: BLOOMBERG*

JERUSALEM, 9 MAY

Yemen's Houthi rebels on Thursday claimed two missile attacks in the Gulf of Aden on two Panama-flagged container ships that caused no damage, while also saying they targeted a ship in the Indian Ocean in a previously unreported assault.

The claims by Brig Gen Yahya Saree come as the tempo of the rebel attacks have waned in recent weeks as they've been targeted by repeated airstrikes launched by a US-led coalition warship in waterways crucial to international trade. The Houthis insist their assaults will continue as long as Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip goes on. Saree in a prerecorded statement claimed attacks on the MSC Diego and MSC Gina. The Joint Maritime Information Centre, a US-led coalition of nations operating in the Mideast, said those two missile attacks happened early Tuesday.

"The vessels were last reported proceeding to next port of call." The center added that the vessels were "likely targeted due to perceived Israeli affiliation." *—AP*

May change nuclear doctrine if 'existence threatened': Iran

Iran could be pushed into building a nuclear weapon if Israel threatens its existence, an adviser to the country's supreme leader has warned. "We have no decision to build a nuclear bomb but should Iran's existence be threatened, there will be no choice but to change our military doctrine," said Kamal Kharrazi, an adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, . The comments have raised questions about what Iran has long claimed is a peaceful nuclear programme. *—Al Jazeera*

2 brothers held for stabbing Indian student in Australia

Abhijeet Abhijeet and Robin Gartan

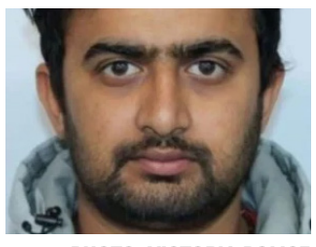


PHOTO: VICTORIA POLICE

MELBOURNE, 9 MAY

Two Indian-origin brothers wanted in connection with the murder of a 22-year-old MTech student from India have been arrested by Australian police, media reports said.

Abhijeet Abhijeet, 26, and Robin Gartan, 27, were arrested on Tuesday in the New South Wales country town of Goulburn police are preparing to extradite them to Victoria, the Goulburn Post reported.

The brothers were on the run since the early hours of Sunday after Navjeet Sandhu from Noble Park was killed and a 30-year-old man, also from Noble Park, was injured at an Ormond home in Melbourne's southeast. Police on Thursday charged Gartan with murder and attempted murder while Abhijeet was charged with affray, the report added. They faced Goulburn Local Court on Thursday morning where their extradition to Victoria was granted. The brothers are set to front the Melbourne Magistrates Court on Friday. Emergency services were called to the house on North Road at about 1 am following reports of a dispute. Navjeet was fatally attacked with a knife by another student when he tried to intervene in a dispute between a few Indian students over some rent issue, according to the deceased victim's uncle Yashvir in Karnal, Haryana. He added that like Navjeet, the alleged accused also hails from Karnal. *—PTI*

9 MAY VIOLENCE

PAKISTAN ON EDGE ON FIRST ANNIVERSARY

ISLAMABAD, 9 MAY

Pakistan was tense on Thursday on the first anniversary of the unprecedented violence last year by supporters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan against key military installations and government buildings.

The mayhem on 9 May last year was led by supporters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party who were triggered into action by the arrest of their leader in a case of alleged corruption.

Khan's party workers vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Jinnah House (Lahore Corps Commander House), Mianwali Airbase and the ISI building in Faisalabad after the cricketer-turned-politician was arrested in a corruption case.

The Army headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi was also attacked by the mob for the first time. PTI leadership, alleging that 9 May was planned by its Opponents, has announced "peaceful protests" on the first anniversary. Khan has refused to apologise for the unprecedented 9 May riots. Party Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan said in a statement that the government launched a crackdown against its workers to stop them from taking to the streets but they would hold demonstrations.

Meanwhile, authorities in Islamabad declared all gatherings as illegal by imposing a ban. Separately, in a message released on the day's eve, President Zardari said, "9 May, 2023, will always be remembered as a dark day in Pakistan's history when a politically instigated mob ran amok across the country, damaging public property and military installations." Condemning the violence, he said that the incidents "severely tarnished" the country's image and thus only "served the interests of Pakistan's enemies". He termed the mob attacks as an "attempt to challenge the writ of the state, undermine the rule of law and weaken institutions".

The President said peaceful demonstrations and constructive criticism were the essence of democracy, emphasising that the Constitution enshrined the fundamental rights of assembly and expression.

Zardari urged political parties, the Parliament, the media and civil society to strengthen democracy by upholding the rule of law and fostering a culture of tolerance, political dialogue and inclusivity. *—PTI*

Former prime minister of Pakistan Imran Khan's party workers vandalised a dozen military installations *PHOTO: X/@THENEWSDRUM*

Lahore airport fire: Int'l Hajj flights delayed

LAHORE, 9 MAY

Fire broke out at Lahore airport in the lounge area causing chaos and disrupting several international flights, including the inaugural Hajj journeys. Swift action from emergency responders contained the flames, ensuring no harm to individuals. However, the fire, originating from the immigration counter's ceiling, filled the lounge with smoke, necessitating the evacuation of passengers. *—ANI*

7 workers killed in terrorist attack in Gwadar

KARACHI, 9 MAY

At least seven workers were killed in a terrorist attack by unknown gunmen on Thursday in Pakistan's port city of Gwadar in the restive Balochistan province. According to Gwadar Police Station Station House Officer Mohsin Ali, unidentified gunmen opened fire on a residential quarter near the Gwadar Fish Harbour in the Surbandar area, leaving seven dead and one injured. *—PTI*

Russia's celebration of victory in WW II is a key pillar of Putin's rule

MOSCOW, 9 MAY

Russia on Thursday wrapped itself in patriotic pageantry for Victory Day, a celebration of its defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II that President Vladimir Putin has turned into a pillar of his nearly quarter-century in power and a justification of his move into Ukraine. Even though few veterans of what Russia calls the Great Patriotic War are still alive 79 years after Berlin fell to the Red Army, the victory over Nazi Germany remains the most important and widely revered symbol of the country's prowess and a key element of national identity.

Thursday's festivities across Russia, led by Putin who this week began his fifth term in office, recall that wartime sacrifice in what has become its most important secular holiday. "The Victory Day unites all generations," Putin said in a speech at Red Square parade. "We are going forward relying on our centuries-old traditions and feel confident that together we will ensure a free and secure future of Russia."

He hailed the troops fighting in Ukraine for their courage and blasted the West, accusing it of "fueling regional conflicts, inter-ethnic and inter-religious strife and trying to contain sovereign and independent centres of global development." The Soviet Union lost about 27 million people in the war, an estimate that many historians consider conservative, scarring virtually every family. Since coming to power on the last day of 1999, Putin has made 9 May an important part of his political agenda, featuring displays of military might. *—AP*

Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed the troops fighting in Ukraine for their courage and blasted the West *PHOTO: X/@knowvity*

ANOTHER WHISTLEBLOWER

Boeing parts had 'serious defects'

NEW YORK, 9 MAY

Plane bodies made by Boeing's largest supplier regularly left the factory with serious defects, according to a former quality inspector at the firm.

Santiago Paredes who worked for Spirit AeroSystems in Kansas, told the BBC he often found up to 200 defects on parts being readied for shipping to Boeing.

He was nicknamed "show-stopper" for slowing down production when he tried to tackle his concerns, he claimed. Spirit said it "strongly disagree[d]" with the allegations.

"We are vigorously defending against his claims," said a spokesperson for Spirit, which remains Boeing's largest supplier. He was accustomed to finding "anywhere from 50 to 100, 200" defects on fuselages - the main body of the plane - that were due to be shipped to Boeing, he said.

"I was finding a lot of missing fasteners, a lot of bent parts, sometimes even missing parts."

A Boeing 737 plane carrying 85 people skidded off the runway at the airport in Dakar, Senegal's capital, injuring 10 people *PHOTO: x@JacdecNew*

'Fuss'

Spirit AeroSystems and Boeing have both come under intense scrutiny after an unused door came off a brand new 737 Max shortly after take-off in January, leaving a gaping hole in the side of the plane. According to investigators, the door had originally been fitted by Spirit, but had subsequently been removed by Boeing technicians to rectify faulty riveting. Some of the defects he identified while at Spirit were minor - but some were serious.

Whistleblowing

Many of Paredes' alleged experiences at Spirit form part of his testimony in legal action that disgruntled shareholders have brought against the firm.

However, in legal documents he is referred to simply as "Former Employee 1". This is the first time Paredes, a former Air Force technician, has spoken publicly.

Before his departure from the firm, Paredes led a team of inspectors based at the end of the 737 Max production line.

Boeing support

Spirit was once part of Boeing and remains the planemaker's primary supplier. *—BBC News*

Boeing skids off runway in Senegal airport

DAKAR, 9 MAY

A Boeing 737 plane carrying 85 people skidded off the runway at the airport in Dakar, Senegal's capital, injuring 10 people, a statement from the country's transport minister said in a statement on Thursday. El Malick Ndiaye, the transport minister, said the Air Senegal flight operated by TransAir was headed to Bamako late on Wednesday carrying 79 passengers, two pilots and four cabin crew. The injured were being treated in hospital. *—AP*

Rupee settles 2 paise higher at 83.50 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 9 MAY

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day on a flat note, higher by 2 paise at 83.50 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, on weak domestic markets and a strong American currency. Forex traders said massive foreign fund outflows dented investors' sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit traded in a narrow range. It opened at 83.49, and touched an intraday high of 83.44. The local unit finally settled for the day at 83.50 (provisional), higher by 2 paise over its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee stayed range-bound and settled 1 paisa lower at 83.52 against the US dollar. "The Indian rupee traded flat on weak domestic markets and a strong US dollar. The overnight jump in crude oil prices also put pressure on the rupee. However, likely dollar inflows supported the rupee earlier in the day," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. —*PTI*

SBI Q4 profit grows 18% to ₹21,384 cr

MUMBAI, 9 MAY

The country's largest lender SBI on Thursday reported 18.18 per cent growth in March quarter consolidated net profit to Rs 21,384.15 crore as against Rs 18,093.84 crore in the year-ago period. On a standalone basis, profit grew to Rs 20,698.35 crore from Rs 16,694.51 crore a year ago, the lender said in a regulatory filing. Consolidated net profit in fiscal year 2023-24 was up 20.55 per cent to Rs 67,084.67 crore as against Rs 55,648.17 crore in FY23. In Q4 FY24, total income rose to Rs 1.28 lakh crore from Rs 1.06 lakh crore in the year-ago period, while operating expenses grew at a relatively slower rate at Rs 30,276 crore from the year-ago period's Rs 29,732 crore. There was an improvement in gross non-performing assets ratio to 2.24 per cent as on 31 March, 2024, as against 2.78 per cent in the year-ago period and 2.42 per cent at the end of December quarter. . —*PTI*

Zydus Lifesciences gets USFDA nod for acne treatment gel

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

E Zydus Lifesciences Ltd on Thursday said that it has received final approval from the US health regulator to market its generic version of Dapsone gel used to treat acne. The final approval by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) is for Dapsone gel of strength 7.5 per cent, Zydus Lifesciences said in a regulatory filing. Dapsone gel is used to treat acne and will be manufactured at the group's topical manufacturing facility in Changodar, Ahmedabad, it added. Dapsone gel, 7.5 per cent had annual sales of $35.8 million in the US, Zydus Lifesciences said, citing IQVIA MAT March 2024 data. —*PTI*

'T100' carbon fibre production to begin in 2.5 years

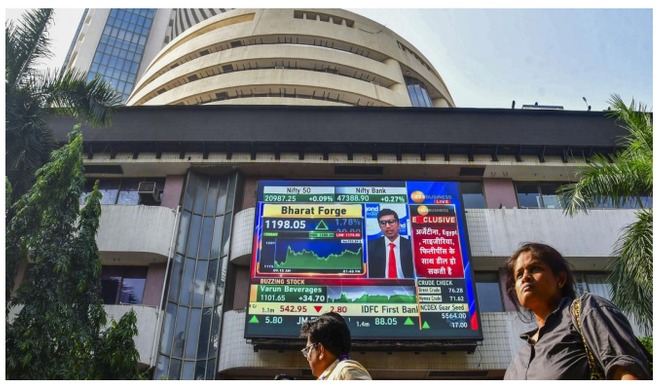
NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

India will start manufacturing 'T100' type of carbon fibre in the next 2.5 years in a bid to overcome the import licensing restrictions that prevent its use in strategic applications, NITI Aayog member VK Saraswat said . T100 carbon fibre is used in defence, aerospace and civil engineering sectors, in the making of hydrogen cylinders, missiles, launch vehicles, aircraft, bullet proof jackets, bridges construction among others. "I am confident that in the coming 2-2.5 years India will be able to make its own carbon fibre T100 which can be used in manufacturing of hydrogen cylinders, missiles and construction of bridges. "The licensing pattern of foreign nations is such that they are not giving us T100 material for any strategic applications. We want to overcome this and therefore the government's programme is to promote development of its indigenous production," Saraswat said.—*PTI*

Investors lose ₹7L cr as Sensex tanks

Nifty tanks by 345 points or 1.55% on Thursday

MUMBAI, 9 MAY



Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra are the gainers PHOTO: PTI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled about 1.5 per cent on Thursday amid heavy foreign fund outflows and selling in HDFC Bank, Larsen & Toubro and Reliance Industries. Declining for the third day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 1,062.22 points or 1.45 per cent to settle at 72,404.17.

During the day, it tanked 1,132.21 points or 1.54 per cent to 72,334.18. The NSE Nifty dived 345 points or 1.55 per cent to 21,957.50. During the day, it tumbled 370.1 points or 1.65 per cent to 21,932.40.

From the Sensex basket, Larsen & Toubro tanked over 5 per cent after March quarter earnings.

Asian Paints, JSW Steel, ITC, Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, Tata Steel, NTPC, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and Power Grid were among the laggards. In contrast, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, Infosys and HCL Tech were the gainers. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 6,669.10 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled with gains, while Seoul and Tokyo ended lower. European markets were trading on a mixed note. Wall Street closed mixed in overnight trade on Wednesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.48 per cent to USD 83.89 a barrel. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 45.46 points or 0.06 per cent to settle at 73,466.39 on Wednesday.

The NSE Nifty remained unchanged at 22,302.50.

—*PTI*

PLANS TO BOUNCE BACK

Air India bets on billions in a comeback post crisis

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Tata Group's initial priority has been its ageing fleet, the upkeep of which has been neglected for decades PHOTO: PTI

Air India was once so renowned for its service that Singapore's founding statesman Lee Kuan Yew used the airline as a blueprint for launching the city-state's own flag carrier in the early 1970s.

In recent decades, the airline came to be seen as a cautionary tale of decline as it racked up billions of dollars in losses and battled a reputation for tardiness and poor service.

When the Tata Group bought the company in October 2021, returning control to the wealthy Tata family after decades of state ownership, CEO Natarajan Chandrasekaran laid out a clear objective: "To build a world-class airline".

Tasked with leading this mission is Air India CEO Campbell Wilson, who was recruited from Singapore's low-cost airline Scoot in 2022 to turn around the carrier, founded in 1932 by French-Indian aviator entrepreneur JRD Tata.

But Wilson is adamant that "the journey to restoring Air India to its former glory is well under way" under a five-year turnaround plan unveiled last year.

The Tata Group has spent tens of billions in transforming the company in recent years, investing in 470 new aircraft, cabin modernisation, a brand refresh and customer service changes. After the "capital-intensive" five-year plan is completed, Air India hopes to capitalise on the huge growth potential of the Indian aviation market, the world's third-largest with some 145 million domestic passengers annually.

The Tata Group's initial priority has been its ageing fleet, the upkeep of which has been neglected for decades.

Air India's largest investment came with its announcement of plans to buy 470 new Airbus and Boeing aircraft at a cost of USD 70 billion , including 140 A320neos, 70 A321neos, and 190 of the 737 MAX. Wilson said the acquisitions will enable Air India to "operate the most advanced and fuel-efficient fleet within five years".

Other changes to improve onboard service include introducing premium economy seats on selected long-haul flights and new food menus.

Courtesy, Al Jazeera

Byju's slashes course fees by 30-40 per cent

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

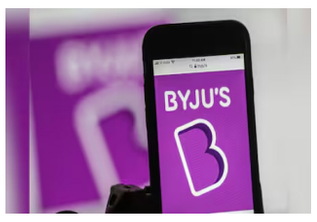


PHOTO: PTI

Edtech firm Think and Learn owner of Byju's brand has slashed course subscription fees by 30-40 per cent and hiked sales incentives by 50-100 per cent, according to sources. Byju's Founder and CEO Byju Raveendran, who has started handling the company's daily operations, in a meeting with 1,500 sales associates and managers, has announced change in sales strategy inclined towards scalability and flexibility.

"The annual subscription for the Byju's Learning App is now available at a yearly early price of Rs 12,000 (inclusive of taxes), while Byju's classes and Byju's Tuition Centres (BTC) are priced at Rs 24,000 and Rs 36,000, respectively, for a complete year of classes," sources privy to the development said.

This is almost a 30-40 per cent reduction in rates, they said.

Raveendran has also promised to settle all dues of the sales team with higher incentives."The average sales salary is Rs 40,000 per month. So, close a couple of sales, and you can get not just your salary but also clear your arrears. You can earn many multiples of your CTC through this model," Byju said.

He announced that Byju's sales associates will receive 100 per cent incentives for the closed sales directly into their accounts the next working day, while managers will receive 20 per cent of the same from the company. —*PTI*

THIRD YEAR IN A ROW

Household savings decline due to rising home, auto loans

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

The net household savings declined sharply by Rs 9 lakh crore to Rs 14.16 lakh crore in three years to 2022-23 PHOTO: PTI

Household savings are estimated to have declined for the third year in a row in FY24 as liabilities on account of interest towards housing and vehicle loans have continued to rise, but the trend could reverse in 2024-25 on account of the impact of RBI's curbs on personal loan.

The net household savings declined sharply by Rs 9 lakh crore to Rs 14.16 lakh crore in three years to 2022-23, as per the National Account Statistics 2024 data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

Explaining the data, ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar attributed the declining trend in household savings to a sharp 73 per cent year-on-year increase in liabilities during 2022-23. She further said that as per the indication the trend of decrease in household savings has continued in 2023-24, the data for which is likely to be released later. However, the trend could reverse in 2024-25 as RBI has taken measures to curb unsecured personal loans, she said.

Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran attributed the decline to a shift in portfolio where savings were being channelised to real assets. "Household net financial savings flows were lower in FY23 and there were some concerns around that, which said households are saving less. But, in reality, it was a portfolio shift where the savings were going into real assets," Nageswaran had said at a NCAER event on Wednesday. —*PTI*

FITCH AFFIRMS AXIS BANK, ICICI BANK RATINGS

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Fitch Ratings on Thursday affirmed the ratings of Axis Bank and ICICI Bank with a stable outlook citing supportive operating environment and large domestic franchise. Fitch Ratings has affirmed India-based Axis Bank and ICICI Bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'BB+', the global agency said in two separate rating commentaries.

The agency said its expectation of a supportive operative environment is on account of India's robust medium-term growth potential. With regard to Axis Bank, Fitch said the bank's appetite for growth is likely to remain above the sector average, albeit similar to other large private banks. On ICICI Bank, Fitch said it maintains a positive outlook on its earnings and profitability score, as it expects profitability. —*PTI*

DLF sells 795 flats for ₹5.6K cr

In January, DLF had sold 1,113 luxury apartments in Gurugram PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Realty firm DLF has sold all 795 apartments for Rs 5,590 crore within three days of the launch of its new luxury housing project in Gurugram, driven by strong demand from consumers including NRIs.

In a regulatory filing on Thursday, the company informed about the successful launch of its latest luxury residential project 'DLF Privana West', "achieving a remarkable sellout valued at approximately Rs 5,590 crores, within 3 days." The new project is spread over 12.57-acre comprising 795 apartments. The average selling price was around Rs 7 crore per apartment.

In January this year, the company had sold 1,113 luxury apartments in Gurugram for Rs 7,200 crore within three days of the launch of its project 'DLF Privana South', which is spread over 25-acre.

Both 'DLF Privana West' and 'DLF Privana South' are part of its 116-acre township 'DLF Privana' located in Sector 76 and 77 at Gurugram in Haryana.

According to sources, DLF received Expression of Interests (EOIs) from around 1,550 and 1,600 customers, almost double of total units being offered in this new project, reflecting high demand for ultra-luxury homes.

Non-resident Indians (NRIs) lapped up around 27 per cent of the total 795 units. NRIs have been investing a lot in premium housing projects in Gurugram to earn decent rental income, besides capital appreciation.

Gurugram housing market has witnessed a significant growth in demand for residential properties, leading to a sharp rise in prices. The demand has sustained so far despite the hefty price appreciation. —*PTI*

Shankar Raman PHOTO: PTI

SHANKAR RAMAN IS PRESIDENT OF L&T

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Engineering and construction conglomerate Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Thursday announced the elevation of R Shankar Raman as the President of the company.

Raman continues to hold the position of the Whole-time Director and CFO of the company.

Moreover, Subramanian Sarma who has been a Senior Executive Vice President (EVP), Energy is elevated as Wholetime Director and President, Energy with immediate effect.

—*PTI*

TCS CEO takes home ₹25.36 crore in FY24

MUMBAI, 9 MAY

Krithivasan PHOTO: PTI

K Krithivasan, the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer and managing director of TCS, took home a pay of over Rs 25 crore in FY24, the company said on Thursday.

Krithivasan took charge as the head of the country's largest IT services exporter in June 2023, after the surprising exit of Rajesh Gopinathan. His appointment is for a period of five years.

As per the company's annual report, Krithivasan earned a salary of Rs 1.27 crore, with benefits, perquisites and allowances of Rs 3.08 crore and bagged a commission of Rs 21 crore during the fiscal year.

The earnings include his compensation as the global head of the largest vertical of banking, financial services and insurance at TCS, it said.

Interestingly, the chief operating officer of the company, N G Subramaniam earned Rs 26.18 crore during the financial year.

Subramaniam, who is due to retire from the company soon, was in the role for the entire year and his emoluments included a salary of Rs 1.72 crore; Rs 3.45 crore in benefits, perquisites and allowances, and Rs 21 crore in commission. —*PTI*

SILVER NOSEDIVES ₹1,500

Gold falls ₹50 on Akshaya Tritiya eve

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Gold had settled at Rs 72,300 per 10 grams previously PHOTO: PTI

Extending the losses for the second straight session, gold and silver prices slumped in the national capital on Thursday in line with weak trends in the global markets.

According to HDFC Securities, gold prices declined Rs 50 to Rs 72,250 per 10 grams in Delhi. It had settled at Rs 72,300 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver prices also fell Rs 1,500 to Rs 83,200 per kg. In the previous close, it had ended at Rs 84,700 per kg.

"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 72,250 per 10 grams, down by Rs 50 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,308 per ounce, lower by USD 2 from the previous close.

Gold fluctuated in a narrow range, above USD 2,300 an ounce, as investors looked for fresh cues about US inflation and the Federal Reserve's monetary policy interest rate stance, Gandhi said. However, silver was trading slightly higher at USD 27.50 per ounce.

It had ended at USD 27.15 per ounce in the previous close, as per HDFC Securities. "Traders are expected to take cues from weekly job data due later release on Thursday which will provide more insights on the direction of the yellow metal prices," Praveen Singh, Associate VP of Fundamental Currencies and Commodities at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said. —*PTI*

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India's exports surge in 115 nations despite global crisis

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

PHOTO: PTI

India's exports have increased to as many as 115 countries out of the total 238 destinations during 2023-24 despite the global economic uncertainties, according to commerce ministry's data.

These 115 export destinations, which account for 46.5 per cent of India's export basket, include the US, UAE, Netherland, China, UK, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Bangladesh, Germany and Italy.

The merchandise exports dipped by 3 per cent to USD 437.1 billion in the last fiscal. However, services exports rose to USD 341.1 billion in 2023-24 as against USD 325.3 billion in 2022-23.

The data showed that despite persistent global challenges, overall exports (goods and services together) hit the highest level in 2022-23.

Overall exports reached USD 778.2 billion in 2023-24 as compared to USD 776.4 billion in 2022-23, registering a marginal growth of 0.23 per cent.

The share of India's merchandise exports has also increased marginally from 1.70 per cent in 2014 to 1.82 per cent in 2023. India's rank in world merchandise exporters too has improved from 19th to 17th during the same period.

Further, India's export to its top 10 destinations witnessed a 13 per cent year-on-year increase in 2023-24.

—*PTI*

CL SF: London calling Madrid for record 18th final

Real Madrid won the match against Bayern 4-3 on agg

MADRID, 9 MAY

After yet another magical night at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, Real Madrid is back in the Champions League final.

The 14-time European champion pulled off another thrilling comeback on Wednesday, rallying to defeat Bayern Munich 2-1 and reach the final for the second time in three seasons. Like it happened so many times in 2022, Madrid needed some late drama to advance.

Joselu scored in the 88th minute and then in stoppage time as Madrid advanced 4-3 on aggregate to set up a final against Borussia Dortmund on 1 June in London. "Well, it has happened again what has happened so many times before," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "It's inexplicable. Fans who push us on, a fantastic stadium, players who never stop believing — it's simply something magical."

Bayern had taken the lead on an Alphonso Davies goal in the 68th — and then deep in stoppage time thought it had equalised but hadn't because of an offside call that Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel described as "disastrous" and "against the rules." The German international faltered in the final minutes, dropping an easy ball after a shot by Vinícius Júnior and allowing Joselu — who came off the bench in the 81st — to equalise from in front of the goal. Joselu, a German-born striker, then gave Madrid the lead a minute into stoppage time after a cross by Madrid defender Antonio Rüdiger off the left side.

Real Madrid players celbrate after beating Bayern Munich in Champions League semifinal *PHOTO: X/@realmadrid*

The linesman initially raised the flag for offside, and it took a few moments before Madrid players and the crowd at the Bernabeu could celebrate the winner.

"Manu, who had been exceptional in saving us all night, made a mistake he wouldn't make in another 100 years," Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel said. "You always dream of being part of moments like this," Joselu,34, said. "Not even my best dreams were as good as this."

Neuer said "anyone who's ever played football knows how I'm feeling right now." It will be Madrid's record-extending 18th European Cup final, and ninth in the Champions League era, also a record. Madrid beat Liverpool when it last made it to the final in 2022, a season marked by several late comebacks like that one it pulled off on Wednesday.

—AP

Dommaraju Gukesh *PHOTO: PTI*

Arjun holds Carlsen; quiet start for Gukesh in Warsaw

WARSAW, 8 MAY

Newly-crowned FIDE Candidates' champion D Gukesh had a subdued start but compatriot Erigaisi Arjun held the world number one Magnus Carlsen of Norway to an easy draw in the opener of the Superbet Rapid and Blitz tournament, a part of the Grand Chess tour.

World Number seven Arjun also drew two more games to remain within striking distance of early leader Kirill Shevchenko of Romania after the tournament's third round. On a day when Gukesh lost his first two games before drawing the third, R Praggnanandhaa recovered in the third round to beat Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan to a fifty percent score.Shevchenko, the lowest seed in the tournament emerged as the early leader with three victories on the trot coming in contrasting fashion.

The Ukrainian-turned-Romanian benefitted from a rare blunder by Gukesh in the first round, defeated Praggnanandhaa in a brilliantly crafted game, and then showed his technical acumen to crash through the defenses of Vincent Keymer of Germany.With each victory in the rapid worth two points, Shevchenko marched his way to six points and enjoyed two two-point lead over nearest rivals Carlsen and Abdusattorov who both have four points.Arjun and Praggnanandhaa share the fourth spot on 3 points apiece along with Keymer. *—PTI*

INTERNATIONAL MASTER KOSHY DIES AT 66

CHENNAI, 9 MAY

International Master, renowned trainer and a mentor to many aspirants, Varugeese Koshy, has died. He was 66. Koshy leaves behind two sons and his wife. Koshy had known about his terminal lung cancer for about ten months and he dealt with the dreaded disease with his impeccable sense of humour.

"Apna time aa gaya," he had said in October last year. Starting out as a rebel, Koshy was one of the few self-taught gentlemen of the chess world. His hyper-modern approach to the 64-squares gave him a distinct advantage over most of his peers. In the era when computers played very little role, Koshy rose from the ashes with his superior skills to analyze various positions and went on to become India number two in the National Championship of the early nineties.

Koshy represented the country on various occasions but his biggest contribution to the game came as a trainer. He trained many other Indian players, like former world junior champion Abhijeet Gupta, who would bring glory to the nation and each of his students have always gone on record saying that his help was instrumental in bringing them to the present levels. His aura was such that he was always addressed as Sir or Boss after his last name. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Amir gets Irish visa, set to join Pakistan side

LAHORE, 9 MAY

Pakistan cricket authorities heaved a sigh of relief on Thursday after the Irish consulate issued a visa to Muhammad Amir who is likely to join the team before the second T20I in Dublin on 12 May. The first of the three T20Is will be played on Friday at the Clontaff ground. A PCB source said the board has been notified about Amir's visa clearance and they are making travel arrangements for the left-arm pacer.*—PTI*

Anant Jeet Naruka finishes 15th in skeet in Baku

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Anant Jeet Singh Naruka needed two perfect rounds to be in contention to reach the final, but missed one target in both, to bow out in 15th place in the men's skeet competition of the ongoing International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun in Baku. Anant Jeet, a Paris quota holder in the event, shot rounds of 24 each on Day Two of qualifications to finish with a score of 120, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) informed in a release on Thursday. *—PTI*

Premier League announces eight nominees

LONDON, 9 MAY

The Premier League has announced the eight players that have been nominated for the PL Player of the Season award. Erling Haaland and Phil Foden are the two nominees from the defending champions Manchester City. The midfield duo of Martin Odegaard and Declan Rice will be representing the current league leaders Arsenal, Alexander Isak (Newcastle United), Virgil Van Dijk (Liverpool), Ollie Watkins (Aston Villa) and Cole Palmer (Chelsea) are the other nominees as per the announcement. *—AP*

CSK aims to continue its ascent to the top 3

AHMEDABAD, 8 MAY

Despite being hit by the absence of key bowlers due to injuries as well as international commitments, Chennai Super Kings will still like to display their on-field ruthlessness while taking on wooden spooners Gujarat Titans in a 12th round IPL encounter here on Friday.

Caught in a mid-table logjam with 12 points from 11 games, the away match against Gujarat will be very important for Ruturaj Gaikwad's men as they are still not assured of a playoff berth and a defeat could dent their chances.

With Deepak Chahar and Matheesha Pathirana out of the tournament due to injuries and Mustafizur Rahman back on national duty, CSK's bowling attack sans Ravindra Jadeja and Tushar Deshpande can at best be termed second string.

A lot will depend on how the three CSK spinners -- Ravindra Jadeja, Mitchell Santner, and Moeen Ali bowl on a two-paced track.

Yet, how CSK defended a total of 167 in Dharamsala against Punjab Kings will give their fans hope of upping the ante against Titans, who have already lost seven in the tournament so far.

A win will take them to third place in the standings, ahead of Sunrisers Hyderabad by a better net run rate. Among the three teams stuck on 12 points, only CSK (+0.700) enjoys a positive net run rate.

On paper, bottom-placed Titans are still in the mix but with a maximum tally of 14 points, it would be very difficult for the Shubman Gill-led side to get into the top four.

The side is low on confidence having managed just one win from their last five matches and has struggled in all departments of the game. *—PTI*

TODAY'S MATCH

Time: 7:30 PM

Where To Watch:

Jio Cinema, Star Sports Network

Stadium: Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad

DIAMOND LEAGUE

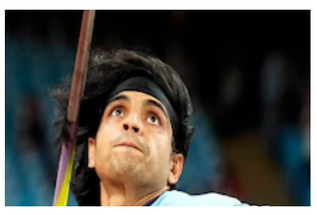
Chopra set to start Olympic build-up

DOHA, 9 MAY

Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra's Paris Games preparations will be put through a stern test when he begins his season in the first leg of the prestigious Diamond League one-day meet series against a star-studded but familiar field, here on Friday.

The 26-year-old Indian javelin superstar, who is also the reigning world and Asian Games champion, will be up against the likes of former world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada and Olympic and world-medallist Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic.

Asian Games silver-medallist and his compatriot Kishore Jena will also be in the fray as he makes his Diamond League debut. Jena has a personal best of 87.54m while Chopra's all-time best is 89.94m, which is also the national record.



Neeraj Chopra *PHOTO: PTI*

"I think I am ready for tomorrow. I like to be consistent, it is one of my greatest weapons. I will throw over 90m but consistency is more important," Chopra said in a pre-event press conference.

European champion Julian Weber of Germany, fourth in the Olympic Games and World Championships, will also compete in the 10-man field. The league will then move to Morocco on May 19.

Chopra is also the defending champion here as he had set the tone for his title-laden 2023 season with a victory ahead of Vadlejch and Peters.

"Success depends on teamwork. My coach and physio make immense contributions. The coach reviews my technique and we talk about what's the best style for me. We also have a specialist for strength training. Planning has been key," Chopra was quoted as saying in a Sports Authority of India release.

The Indian had sent the spear to a distance of 88.67m then as against the 88.63m and 85.88m of Vadlejch and Peters respectively.

In 2022, Peters had delivered the fifth-longest throw in history (93.07m) at the Qatar Sports Club here.

Vadlejch, the Tokyo Olympics silver-medallist and 2023 Diamond League champion had recorded a personal best of 90.88m here in 2022. *—PTI*

K L RAHUL'S CAPTAINCY UNDER SCANNER

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

All but out of contention for the IPL play-offs, KL Rahul's future as Lucknow Super Giants skipper is uncertain for the remaining two games after the team received a pasting at the hands of Sunrisers Hyderabad on Wednesday.

After his captaincy and archaic T20 batting style, there is still no clarity if the management would like to retain him by paying a hefty Rs 17 crore before the mega auction next season. The LSG management is tight-lipped on the issue. However, there is speculation that the skipper might step down on his own and concentrate on batting during the next two games.

"There is a five-day gap before the next game against DC. As of now, no decision has been taken. *—PTI*

INDIA WOMEN CLEAN SWEEP BANGLADESH 5-0 IN T20I SERIES

SYLHET, 9 MAY

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur won the toss and decided to bat in the fifth T20I against Bangladesh, on a bright and sunny afternoon in Sylhet.

Batting first, India put on 156-5, the highest total from any team in this series and in reply, Bangladesh's batters continued to struggle and scored 135-6 in their 20 overs.

The match which had 291 runs in total happened to be the highest match aggregate involving the two teams.

For India, there were contributions throughout their batting order with Smriti Mandhana (33 from 25 balls), Dayalan Hemalatha (37 from 28 balls), captain Harmanpreet Kaur (30 from 24 balls) and Richa Ghosh, (28 not out from 17 balls) getting runs.

Spinners Rabeya Khan and Nahida Akter were the pick of the bowlers for Bangladesh as they picked up two wickets each. In reply, Bangladesh never really got going and was always behind in the run chase, losing wickets regularly, before the sixth wicket.

Ritu Moni and Shorifa Khatun's 57-run partnership was the Tigress's highest for the 6th wicket in T20Is, breaking the record of 32 between Sanjida Islam and Nigar Sultana. PLAYER OF THE MATCH Radha Yadav India-W 3/24 *—AP*

Radha Yadav *PHOTO: AFP*

WRESTLING BODY SUSPENDS BAJRANG

SAI approves his training stint abroad

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Wrestling's world governing body UWW has suspended Bajrang Punia till the end of this year following NADA's decision to hand him a provisional suspension for refusing to undergo a dope test.

However, in a rather surprising decision, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) sanctioned close to Rs nine lakh for his training abroad despite being well aware of NADA's order.

Bajrang, one of the country's most successful wrestlers, was suspended by NADA on 23 April after being served a whereabouts failure notice on 18 April.

In his defense, the Tokyo Olympics bronze-medallist said he never refused to give his sample for testing but merely asked the Dope Control Officer to explain the presence of expired kits that were brought to take his sample.

Bajrang Punia *PHOTO: AFP*

Bajrang told PTI that he has not received any communication from the UWW about his suspension but the world governing body while updating its internal system mentions that he stands suspended.

"Suspended for the following reason until 31 Dec 2024," reads the update on Bajrang's profile.

"Provisionally suspended by NADO IND for alleged ADRV (Anti-Doping Rule Violation)," was the reason mentioned.

- Wrestling's world governing body UWW has suspended Bajrang Punia till the end of this year following NADA's decision to hand him a provisional suspension for refusing to undergo a dope test.

Interestingly, the Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), in its 25 April meeting, was informed that Bajrang has been sanctioned Rs 8,82,000 plus airfare (actual) for his proposal to train at Dagestan, Russia from 28 May. Bajrang's initial proposal was for a 35-day training trip from April 24 but, as per the minutes of the MOC meeting, due to "conflicting travel dates due to his whereabouts failure, he chose to defer the travel plans from 24th April 2024 to 28th May 2024."

The proposal also included travel plans of his strength and conditioning coach Kaazi Kiron Mustafa Hasan and his sparring partner Jitender.

Neither Sandip Pradhan, the SAI Director General, nor Col. Rakesh Yadav, joint CEO of TOPS, responded to calls or messages when PTI reached out for an explanation for the decision to sanction his training. Bajrang confirmed that he had given a proposal for approval to SAI. "I am also surprised that SAI cleared it. I have canceled my plan, I am not going anywhere for training now," Bajrang said, adding that his lawyer has filed the reply to NADA. *—PTI*

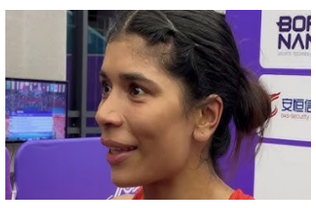
MOC greenlights Nikhat Zareen's equipment

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

The Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) on Thursday approved two-time world championship gold medallist boxer Nikhat Zareen's request for game-ready equipment, which reduces pain and promotes faster recovery after injury, as she tunes up for the upcoming Paris Olympics.

Besides, the MOC also approved the proposal of paddler Achanta Sharath Kamal for financial assistance for training at the National Table Tennis Training Centre in Düsseldorf, Germany.

Game-ready equipment includes laser unit-BTL, ankle wrap game-ready, full leg wrap game-ready, hand wrist wrap game-ready, and trolly BTL Laser Unit.The game-ready equipment uses high-intensity laser applications that control homogenous energy spread without the need for an operator.



Nikhat Zareen *PHOTO: PTI*

This makes the equipment ideal for the back area, large muscle groups, and joint therapy.The equipment thus contributes to pain reduction and faster recovery after injury.

Meanwhile, Sharath will be training for 22 days under his coach Chris Pfeiffer, and center coach Danny Heister. Under the Target Olympics Podium Scheme (TOPS), MOC has recommended funding for his accommodation, food, training. *—PTI*